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*A Quarterly Journal
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Tradition*

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THE LOVE OF THEO AND SOPHIA: And A Man Who Witnessed

W.R. LAUDAHN

"A beautiful woman" appeared to a boy of nine. Imaginative, poetic, and religious, he was in the chapel of Moscow University. As Sophia's meaning unfolded, Vladimir Sergevitch Solovyov saw her on two other occasions. In 1875, at twenty-two, he studied at London's British Museum when she asked that he visit Egypt. Soon thereafter he voyaged to Alexandria. As the sun rose over the Eastern desert near Cairo, the young man admired Sophia for the last time.

A great church dedicated to Holy Sophia arose in old Constantinople (now Istanbul). As *wisdom* the name was honored by Plato. Jacob Boehme praised "the noble Sophia" and the New Birth that she provided. Mystics of the *gnosis* or knowledge of God saw the original One as presenting masculine and feminine phases, themselves divisible. The primary appearance is God and Mind—Theo and Sophia. A golden past and future marks Sophia's role in Gnostic theosophy. To observers in early times, the present (as usual) was murky.

Her soul mothering the Cosmos, Sophia's heart was in Alexandria, Egypt, the intellectual center of the late classical world. Ammonius Saccas, Clement, Origen, Philo and Plotinus had lived, studied, and taught there. Some Gnostics praised

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EDITORIAL

IMPERMANENCE, TRUTH, AND COMPASSION

by Kenneth Small

In this issue we have quoted extensively from Blavatsky's articles "Spiritual Progress", "Civilization, The Death of Art and Beauty" and "What is Truth?" (all available in Michael Gomes new anthology *HPB Teaches: An Anthology* as well as the *Blavatsky Collected Writings*). Our purpose in this is to give emphasis to some of the foundation principles that Blavatsky found of primary importance and that she so eloquently expounded in her essays of the 1880's and which are certainly as applicable today as one hundred years ago. In "Spiritual Progress," she is quite clear when stating "The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent in the impermanent and not only seeking but acting as if we had already found the *unchangeable*, in a world of which the one certain quality is constant change . . ." (ital. ours) What happens in our life, both outer and inner when we solidify into any aspect of it—mental, emotional or physical—a seeming permanence, given the changeable nature of reality?

*"The main cause of pain lies in
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Is not the seeking of outer permanence, based on trying to maintain some aspect of our "self" as also solid and permanent, a "self" that radically changes from moment to moment and day to day? It takes little perception to see the horrendous conflict today that the notion of some kind of permanent identity creates within humanity in the various internal psychological and outer racial and ethnic conflicts currently happening in the world. This also takes form in the need

to solidify sectarian ideas as right, that is solid, permanent, perfect and "true", and anyone who contradicts this, needs to be "cleansed" or simply eliminated as wrong and evil, hence external oppression and genocides and internal loss of human soul and compassion.

Blavatsky again makes clear in the essay "What is Truth?" that "as for absolute truth most of us are as incapable of seeing it as of reaching the moon on a bicycle." Is not perhaps the reflection on Blavatsky's humorous saying here, rather an attitude to cultivate, and the realization the same, as in the Japanese saying not to confuse the finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself? Certainly today this required humility to let go and allow the universal life its innate fluidity comes with pain and difficulty. Even a little inner dialogue and creative inquiry could heal the deep wounds within as well as in society. How heal the wounds? . . . both the beginning and end of this process is emphasized by Blavatsky in *The Voice of the Silence*: "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." and "Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself. Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun. Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed."

—Ed.

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the Higher Sophia, others dragged her lower nature into the swamp of Sin. If we grasp her extended hand, we may arise and commune with the Higher Sophia—"Holy Sophia."

Beautiful, ethereal—but fragile—is she. More robust is the domineering and worldly twin. The Higher Sophia makes up for this with a grand passion that adds luster to her name.

The one who thrice saw Sophia is acclaimed as Russia's first original and systematic philosopher. His brother, Vsevoled, wrote *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, the first critical biography of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who helped revive ancient Theosophia in 1875. Despite Vsevoled's dim view of his subject, Vladimir was a theosopher. In his "Lectures on Godmanhood," Vladimir Solovyov spoke of "Christian theosophy" where "the Logos" (or Theo) is that "which absolutely is." Sophia is the Absolute "as expressed or actual idea (both in) an inward unity..."

*... in the actual or symbolic
Greater Mysteries . . . it is shown
that the only real heresy
is separateness,
as Blavatsky observed*

But Atheism and Materialism were in the air breathed by the Russian Intelligentsia of the later part of the 19th century. Solovyov went through that phase. Later he proposed in a public lecture in St. Petersburg that the old Orthodox Church and Russian Empire transform themselves into a new Kingdom of God on Earth. His church and country, it soon became obvious, were not ready for such a bold step. In despair, he turned to Rome. The Pope, however, would not move over and make room for Sophia. In turn, he did not much care for the priestly demand, then, for blind obedience. In the freedom of a like-minded circle of companions, he addressed Sophia as "the Eternal Feminine," the "wisdom of God," the spirit of Christ's presence.

Almost 2,000 years ago, Christian Gnostics linked Jesus and Sophia as the divine child and wisdom. Less inspired Christians poured their hopes and fears

on the Man whom they said, is God. They banished Sophia to outer darkness.

About 100 years after Solovyov, certain theologians reveal that the sister or mother of Jesus is none other than Sophia. Sister or mother are not the same as on the mundane level, with no relativity in Divinity. In "heaven," Theo-God, Sophia-Christ, the Solar Logos, Buddhas, Saviors, Messengers, Angels, and Prophets are similar respectful terms. The more removed, in the "world of illusion," from the eternal Source, the more differences appear and disappear.

Saved or not, "historical" or not, many holy ladies preceded Mary as "mother of God." The Egyptian Isis was one. Sophia's imitators are incidental. At best, Intermediaries merely stand in for her. She might seem to follow the line of Pagan goddesses, such as Aphrodite, Athena, and Diana. Sophia stands alone—or, rather, with Theo. Among other roles, she is his consort, the "better half." With the early Copts and Gnostics, we cannot make too much of Sophia-Wisdom. From the housetops it is shouted that "Jesus saves." Some may feel that Sophia saves! After all, she is his spirit.

All events have beginnings, midpoints, and endings. Some are cut short. Sophia showers her favors on all, even though often rejected. Many who turn from her in ignorance are religious, not necessarily in the best sense. Higher religions are adapted, for better or worse, from the lonely and bleeding hearts of the mystics. Their spiritual health is made whole in the actual or symbolic Greater Mysteries.

There it is shown that the only real heresy is separateness, as Blavatsky observed. Abundance and emptiness, then, are joined through direct insight of unity in diversity. This is the case even with the worst of evils, for all forms and conditions pass into the limbo of forgetfulness. Realization of this abiding truth is a good deed that causes the lofty Grace to smile upon us. Then we are in divine Love.

On our globe, as nowhere else in the vast background of, at least, our Solar system (as there is always more background than foreground), the seeds of life, form, and consciousness are flung about with wild abandon. "Is there meaning in life?" Like a true Perennial

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Esoteric Science, the Wisdom Religion, embraces all that is good and true in the great religions of mankind, but yet transcends them all. As far as can be expressed in words, it reflects Truth, insisting on the Unity of the cosmic process in which each individual is as a spark to the flame. We are of like nature with the Cosmos, and, being of one Essence, we are members of one family, a family that includes all things and all beings.

From this outline of the Wisdom teaching, we learn of the various levels of operation in the Cosmos, and in relation to man. Further, by emphasizing the important distinction between them, it shows how the personality, when unrestrained, tends to be entirely self-concerned, creating for itself a condition of psychological isolation from the rest of humanity. The Individuality, on the other hand, is rooted in the Unity, of which it is a direct expression. As we become increasingly responsive to this Individuality, it exercises a unifying influence in our lives, enabling us to recognize that identity of nature which makes of all living things one universal Brotherhood.

~oOo~

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Philosopher, Solovyov answered that real meaning is in "the potentiality which alternately draws in and lets out its actual states like the tentacles of some elementary animal."

Most acts and concerns are as meaningful as drops in the bucket of Time. They may, however, become building blocks for our Higher Self, Sophia at her best. Then we consciously participate in the days of our years, expanded and enriched by the "Days and Nights of Brahmā."

In the poetic words of *The Secret Doctrine*, true mystics venture on "the infinite Ocean of Light," one pole of which is "pure Spirit." Matter is the other, "crystallizing into a more and more gross type" but that "has in it the full presence of Soul..."

Some will find—nothing! Religion teaches "creation from nothing." A more complete formula would be "...from All and Nothing, a Unity." The Void is the potency that Aristotle, Plato, and others including Solovyov observed and celebrated. Blavatsky recalled that the Absolute of the Kabala is "No-Thing." Because scientists are finding that out, one of them exclaimed "how wonderful nothing is!"

Sophia's broad appeal is that everyone can use a bit of her wisdom. But the extent of popular demand for

excellence does not match hers. The amount of wisdom that we want and can use depends on us, in the sense of our higher mind (and we know by now who and what that is). In her comments on the Faithful Sophia, known in the Coptic-Gnostic gospels as "Pistis Sophia," Blavatsky understood the lady's essence to be that "the Mind was to instruct the Mind" by way of "self-analyzing reflection."

"Know thyself," reflect on personal, national, and world history and psychology both for its own sake and for whatever the future brings. Sophia's past and present is an education in itself. Her Gospels and commentaries relate how Sophia is the first virginal daughter and consort of The God behind God. She is universal Mother of the Creator-Demiurge and of the Aeons or divine qualities that appear as messengers and angels.

Sophia welcomes all knowledge. To her original mind, that of the Unknown Absolute comes first. In defiance of natural law, she wants and needs the divine Presence now. In her haste, she accepts false illumination below for the Light of lights. Just here, she is like unto us. In a bold leap to capture the brilliance, Sophia falls sparkling into the gloom of Chaos. In her time of troubles, her suffering is the stuff of legend.

Imprisoned in a material form, forced to transmigrate into a mortal female body, Sophia fell among evil men who assaulted and raped her repeatedly. In desperation she went to the length of hiring herself out in a brothel. The Lower Sophia [the "Helen" of Simon Magus] is the lustful one, keeper of profane knowledge.

The third and last time Solovyov saw Sophia was in the land of Egypt. During a second journey there, he was disappointed in not even getting a glimpse of her. Instead he saw a vast Evil, whether in a body or out only God knows. The Gnostic mainstream was famous or infamous for making much of Evil. They were partially justified in that Chaos is the basis of the physical universe, as both Science and the Secret Doctrine discovered. But there is some order—potentiality—even in chaos. There is order out of chaos. It is Motion. No particular location can be discerned for the Source. The process is perpetual,

everywhere and at once. Science does not call it God, but the Secret Doctrine does. This is the object for admiration of Sophia, wisdom. *Genesis* calls it "Good."

Plotinus protested against the Gnostic sects that held to a one-sided view that all of Matter is evil. True theosophers insist on the single nature of the Source, beyond good and evil, and the dual nature, good and evil, of the process outward and onward. They realize, also, that each part of the process is temporary in its value or lack of value to us. Only the Absoluteness is perfect or complete. Effects, manifestations appear in mixed form. Time here is not of the essence. If Mind as we know it and all that is Good should vanish, accidentally or otherwise, the infinite universe has eternity to build, demolish, and rebuild. Precisely here is the eternal salvation.

At last, will we find ourselves "alone with the Alone?" With Plotinus, everyone is now in that feared or favored spot. There is comfort and substance in the gnosis or awareness that however removed the person may be from spiritual freedom, he or she is in the company of Sophia the Less. That is the least that we can do. She always tags along. Only one firm, but right, movement of mind and soul leads to Sophia the Great. They are *that* close. The Higher Sophia bides her time.

One man, V.S. Solovyov saw her in Russia, England, and Egypt. She appeared as "a beautiful woman." Beyond the sensuality is a spirituality. That face has launched more than a thousand ships of the Spirit on what H.P. Blavatsky called "the infinite Ocean of Light."

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THE NATURE OF BUDDHIST MEDITATION

by Lama Doboom Tulku

In Buddhism it is said that for people to live healthy and effective lives it is both useful and important for them to cultivate a daily practice of meditation. By benefiting their own minds in this way, making themselves more calm, controlled and self-aware, they become both happier individuals and better members of society. In Tibetan we have the terms *rangdon* and *shendon*¹, which translate respectively as 'the purpose of oneself' and 'the purpose of others.' To be of benefit to the world, we have to first put ourselves in order. In the Mahāyāna, the motivation is to benefit ourselves in order to be of greater benefit in the world. Meditation is cultivated on this basis.

The Tibetan term for meditation is *gom*². *Gom* literally means to familiarize the mind with a concept, aspect of being, or theme. In this context it means to familiarize our mind with a spiritually significant subject, or to integrate the essence of that theme into our stream of consciousness.

It is important to understand something about the types of meditation practiced in Buddhism. The most general categorization of these is into a twofold scheme: analytical meditation; and concentrated meditation.

Analytical meditation is that part of the process of seeking a spiritual path wherein one investigates the relevant aspects of the object (of meditation) by means of reasoning. This helps one to gain strong conviction and a deeper understanding.

For example, in order to gain realization of the ultimate nature of the mind, it is necessary for us first to understand the mode of its existence. This is not possible without applying some kind of technique, and the success in the application of a technique must be preceded by our having examined well the dynamics of that method.

In general, any kind of mental investigation based on an intention of seeking a spiritual goal can be called analytical meditation.

Concentrated meditation is the phase

of mental application wherein our mind is able to remain focused on a chosen object for a prolonged period of time. That is to say, concentrated meditation occurs when we understand a technique to the extent that we are able to place the mind on a given subject with some degree of stability. Normally, analytical meditation precedes the concentrated application.

Within concentrated meditation there is a special method for achieving one-pointedness of mind. This method is called *zhiney*³ in Tibetan, and *śamatha* [śamatha] in Sanskrit. The form and method as well as the goal of *zhiney* is more or less the same in both the Hindu



and Buddhist traditions. That is to say, it is considered to be a common practice of meditation for both. *Zhiney* is said to be the foundation of all the meditational qualities required for traversing the spiritual paths.

Buddhist meditation must be motivated by disinterest with saṃsāric existence, and by compassionate thoughts towards all sentient beings.

Apart from *zhiney*, most other Buddhist meditations differ from their Hindu counterparts. These differences are often explained in terms of the perspective of the meditator, and also the objects meditated upon.

In general it is said that Buddhist meditation must be motivated by disinterest with saṃsāric existence, and by compassionate thoughts towards all sentient beings. Another characteristic of Buddhist meditation is that all the various techniques must be pervaded by the concept of selflessness, or *anātmā*.

As mentioned earlier, meditation can be of different types. In particular I would like to discuss the type called *zhiney*, or 'single-pointed meditation.'

The practice of *zhiney* is very important to and useful for us, because it is the principal method for calming and stabilizing the mind. Without it our other meditations will not lead to higher realization.

When we have achieved a single-pointed mind our thoughts become clear, calm and stable. In that state we can reason effectively, penetrating deeply into any object of meditation and thus attaining pure realization of its true nature. This penetrative mind is called *lhagton*⁴ in Tibetan, from the Sanskrit term *vipaśhyana* [*vipaśyanā*], which means 'special insight.'

The difference between single-pointed meditation and special insight is that the former principally has the function of pacifying our mind, and thus enabling us to concentrate more deeply on a given subject. Special insight, on the other hand, has the ability to

analyze and penetrate into the subtle nature of an object.

Thus if we sincerely seek the realization of truth we should first develop clarity and strength of mind by means of the *zhiney* training, and then turn this force toward the cultivation of special insight.

Kamalaśīla⁵, a ninth-century Indian saint-scholar, uses the analogy of a lamp to explain how wisdom arises from a single-pointed mind. When a candle is put in a place where there is no wind, it can clearly illuminate everything around it. Similarly, when our mind becomes clear and still, and is free from

agitation and dullness, we are able to develop clear and deep insight into the higher nature of the objects upon which we are meditating.

Among the many objects taken as the focus of meditation for developing single-pointedness, concentrating on our breath as an antidote to discursive thought is very popular and common. Another popular object of concentration in this method is the mind itself.

By developing concentration one passes through nine stages. These nine stages are mentioned according to the gradual development of stability of the mind. I will just list the names of the nine, as this conveys something of a sense of their natures:

- (1) inwardly placing the mind on the object;
- (2) extending the duration of concentration;
- (3) replacing the mind on the object when it is distracted;
- (4) continuously restoring the focus of the mind;
- (5) achieving a state of inner control;
- (7) achieving a state of inner pacification;

fication;

(8) achieving single-pointed mind; and

(9) achieving mental equilibrium.

As said earlier, meditation has the effect of pacifying the mind. For ascetics and ordinary people alike, peace of mind is essential. If you have a peaceful and clear mind, this will enable you to be more effective in any activity that you undertake, be it temporal or spiritual.

Certain meditations of the tantric path involve visualizing oneself as a particular deity. These generally are to be performed only by initiates; but sometimes they can be performed by non-initiates as a method of cultivating concentration.

The practice of meditation has many beneficial effects, from relieving us of stress, to improving our physical and mental health, and making us into more happy and effective human beings. In the end, though, its ultimate goal is to lead us to the states of higher being, nirvana and enlightenment. When we practice it well, all of these beneficial effects become ours.

NOTES

¹ Tib., Rang-don and gZhan-don.

² Tib., sGom. The term is linked to the words 'to familiarize', in the sense of to integrate.

³ Tib., Zhi-gnas, which literally means 'abiding in peace,' or 'peaceful repose.' The sense of the term is that the mind rests on the subject of meditation without the disturbances of being distracted by the two obstacles of torpor and agitation, or mental wandering.

⁴ Tib., Lhag-mthong, which literally means 'special seeing.' The term is related to the cultivation of wisdom, or *sherab* (Tib., Shes-rab; Skt., prajñā).

⁵ Kamalashīla played a very important role in the development of Tibetan religious history. It was he who was invited to Tibet toward the end of the eighth century, and who met with and defeated the Chinese monk Hvasang Mahāyāna in debate, an encounter that would set the tone of Tibet's future spiritual direction. The former represented the classical Indian tradition, and the latter represented a form of Chinese chan (or zen, in Japanese). Kamalashīla, one of India's foremost logicians, easily won the contest. From that time onward Tibet looked almost exclusively to India for its spiritual and cultural direction.

This simile is taken from Kamalashīla's *Stages of Meditation* (Skt., *Bhāvanakrama*; Tib., *bsGom-rim*; Toh. 3916).

MAYA—THE CREATIVE ILLUSION

By Bepin Behari

EVERY school of Indian philosophy, including that of the Chārvākyas—who had a profoundly materialistic approach to the problems of living—has attached considerable significance to the concept of the Cosmic Illusion—Māyā—which elucidates the process of Manifestation and points to the way of Liberation.

The very word Māyā has a profound meaning etymologically; it is derived from the root-word *Ma*, which means "mother" or "to measure" and it is also related to the thinking principle in man. If we meditate on these allusions, the process of cosmogenesis would appear to be the work of Creative Intelligence in contradistinction to the theory of a purely materialistic origin. No one can deny the deeply mysterious nature of the universe which the word Māyā symbolizes. H. P. Blavatsky has aptly remarked that it was no coincidence that this word begins with the letter M, which is one of "the most

sacred" letters. "It is both feminine and masculine, or androgyne, and is made to symbolize WATER in its origin, the great deep." (S.D., Vol. II. p. 99, Adyar Ed.) In Hindu pantheism, *Mahāmāyā* or *Durgā*, who is supposed to be the mother of Death, is a personification of the Great Cosmic Illusion.

The word Māyā has been used variously in different books, but the essential significance of it has remained the same throughout the ages. During the Vedic period, the word was used to indicate wisdom as well as extraordinary or supernatural powers and was often a synonym of *Prajñā*—the power of the Mind. In Upanishadic literature, the word signified Cosmic Illusion, and in this sense it is first found in *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*. This meaning was further emphasized by Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya in his commentaries on *Vedāntasūtra*. He always meant "illusion" by the word Māyā.

The essence of the Vedāntic philosophy is to consider the One Reality, the Self-Existent—the *Svayambhū Nārāyaṇa*—as the source and stream of Life.

According to T. Subba Rao,

Parabrahman—the Absolute All—is the essence of each thing and it is in some sense capable of being the essence of all other things. According to this school, Parabrahman which exists before all things in this cosmos is the one essence from which starts into existence a centre of energy which the ancient writers called *Īśvara* or *Pratyagātmā* or *Śabda Brahman*, but T. Subba Rao preferred to call it the Logos. From the objective standpoint of the Logos, Parabrahman appears to it as *Mūlaprakṛiti*—the Primordial Substance. This *Mūlaprakṛiti* is no more Parabrahman than the bundle of attributes of a pillar is the pillar itself; Parabrahman is an unconditioned and absolute reality, and *Mūlaprakṛiti* is a sort of veil thrown over it. (Cf. T. Subba Rao: *Notes on the Bhagavad Gita*.)

The Śaivites considered Māyā as one of the four *pāśas* or snares. The Vaishnavites considered it as one of the nine *śaktis* or energies of the Lord Vishnu with which He manifests the universe:

even His Consort Lakshmi is often known as Māyā. The Buddhists explained the chief causes of existence in terms of *Nidānas* and *Māyā*.

Because the Buddhists did not believe in any personal God, nor in any Father and Creator of Heaven and Earth, though they believed in an Absolute Consciousness, their approach to the problem of the manifestation of the universe is different. According to them, only "two things are eternal, namely, *Ākāśa* and *Nirvāṇa*," and they hold that "these are *one* in reality, but a *Māyā* when divided." (*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II. p. 360, Adyar Ed.) The supreme place given to *Ākāśa* or Space in the Buddhist doctrine is further stressed by the affirmation that "Everything has come out of *Ākāśa* [or *Svabhāvat* on our earth] in obedience to a law of motion inherent in it. . . . Nothing ever came out of nothing. [H. S. Olcott quoted in *S. D.*, Vol. II. pp. 360-361, Adyar Ed.] Even *Dhamma* (or Law) and *Nirvāṇa* have been included in *Ākāśa*; in fact, in "Tho-og" of which the word *Ākāśa* is an approximate equivalent. The Lord Buddha said,

"There are three things, Bhikshus, that are everlastingly the same, upon which no vicissitude, no modification can ever act: these are the Law, *Nirvāṇa*, and Space, and those three are One, since the first two are within the last, and the last one a *Māyā* so long as man keeps within the whirlpool of sensuous existences." (*S. D.*, Vol. V. p. 379.)

It seems to me that the Buddhist doctrine of considering Tho-og as *Māyā* is in no fundamental sense different from that of the Vedantist conception of *Mūlaprakṛiti*. Furthermore, the Buddhist doctrine affirms the inability of the individual to understand the Fundamental Essence of the universe and rise above the wheel of births and deaths, unless he has eliminated himself from the "whirlpool of sensuous existence," that is from the fetters of *Māyā*. The Lord Buddha has stated,

"Whosoever is unacquainted with my Law, and dies in that state, must return to earth until he becomes a perfect Samano [ascetic]. To achieve this object he must destroy within himself the

trinity of *Māyā*." (*S. D.*, Vol. V., p. 387.)

H. P. Blavatsky has ascribed an extraordinary position to *Māyā*—the illusion, which impedes our understanding of the inherent unity between the different creative forces. Though she stated that "Spirit alone is no *Māyā*," [*S. D.*, Vol. V., p. 388] she did not demarcate a dividing line between Spirit and Matter: "Spirit is Matter on the seventh plane; Matter is Spirit at the lowest point of its cyclic activity," and she acknowledged that "both are—*MĀYĀ*" [*S. D.*, Vol. II, p. 357]. We fail to recognize the veil of *Māyā* because we are entrenched deeply in ignorance. In fact, ignorance and illusion are intimately related. "*Māyā* or

“. . . two things are eternal, namely, *Ākāśa* and *Nirvāṇa*," and they hold that "these are *one* in reality, but a *Māyā* when divided. . . ."

Illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute, reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition." (*S. D.*, Vol. I, p. 112.)

Our power of cognition is considerably restricted by our senses as well as by the intervening media between the cognizer and the object of cognition. Such limitations have been summed up by the words Self, Space and Duration. These prevent the perception of the One Reality. We need to realize the myth of our individual separateness. In fact, all of us are related to everything else. Even our perception of Space and direction is possible only when there is some point of reference. Admiral Byrd, during one of his flights to the Poles very rightly indicated the need for a new conception of time and direction. He stated, "To try to think in terms of north and south, noon and midnight, or even today or tomorrow, is to become hopelessly involved in meaningless contradictory phrases." Talking about Time, modern scientists have revealed their inability to have a uniform unit of it: the speed of the rotation of the earth which measures the unit of time has been varying over the past centuries. Commenting upon

this phenomenon, Mr. N. Sri Ram has emphasized "the limitation of our knowledge and the truth that large and small are relative to our perception." In fact, in this world of relativity, there is no absoluteness.

If the Veil of Illusion which conceals the Absolute All from the field of our experience could be removed, it might enable us to establish a bridge between the microcosm and the Macrocosm. This, however, has to be a continuous process, because the more the veils are removed, the more remain to be lifted. It has been wisely stated that

"as we rise in the scale of development, we perceive that in stages through which we have passed, we mistook shadows for realities, and that the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached 'reality'; but only when we shall have reached absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall be free from the delusions produced by *Māyā*." (*S. D.*, Vol. I, p. 113, Adyar Ed.)

The recent researches in human psychological developments confirm the view that the individual is constantly guided by certain latent powers within himself which lead him towards his archetypal nature. Professor Carl C. Jung, having analyzed the psychic life of a large number of modern human beings, has indicated that "In the last analysis every life is the realization of the whole, that is, of a self, for which reason, this realization can be called individuation." While discussing the process of development towards this goal, he stated that "the symbols of the process of individuation that appear in dreams are images of an archetypal nature which depict the centralizing process or the product of a new center of personality." Though the materialistic psychologists have still shown great reluctance in accepting the view of pilgrim souls moving towards the source of Life and Light, Professor Jung does consider the universal path of human beings to be "the return of the soul to the sun-god from whom it originated."

There have been many esoteric schools, which from time to time imparted instruction to deserving aspirants to accelerate their pilgrimage to the

shrines of Light. The Templars, the Eleusinians, the Rosicrucians, and the Alchemists imparted such instructions.

In fact, every living religion has an inner side which is given out to the individual candidates in the solitude of their hearts.

In India, the various systems of the Yoga discipline have been suggested to enable the student to perceive his Real nature and thereby establish himself in that state. Mr. N. Sri Ram in his

Consciousness: Its Nature and Action brings out the relationship between the nature of consciousness and Truth. When a person is fully awake, and when modifications in his consciousness have completely ceased—which in fact, is the goal of all yogic disciplines—then *manas* and *buddhi* are automatically integrated. "It is then a new consciousness which has in itself the nature of truth and in its actions expresses the beauty of that truth." With enlightenment, the unreal

falls away; with pure awareness, one is conscious at all levels of existence. But for this, one has to watch oneself—the inner working of his mind—very carefully. J. Krishnamurti has remarked that, "It is only when the mind understands the superficial and the hidden, that it can go beyond its own limitations and discover that bliss which is not of time." It is only then that the individual is liberated from the fetters of *Māyā*.
—from *The Theosophist*, August 1967

A HISTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA

by Dr. Luba Bytchikhina,
Moscow, Russia

The following is reprinted from *Pathways*, The Theosophical Society in Victoria, B.C. Canada. Its Editor's Note reads: *We are most grateful to Dr. Luba Bytchikhina, International Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Russia for making this article available to the Victoria Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Canada.*

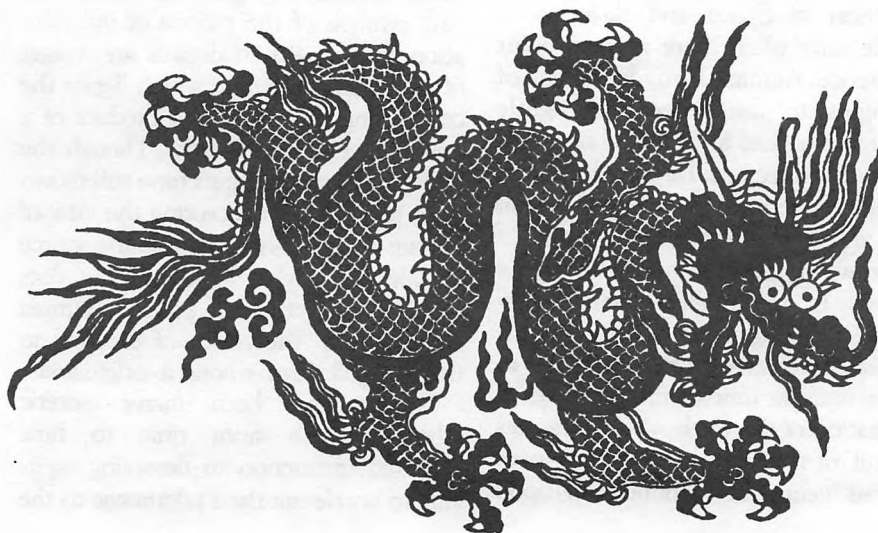
Theosophy in Russia as a religious-philosophical movement which played its part in the Russian spiritual renaissance at the turn of this century and which was banned after the October revolution, has its own peculiar history, full of tragic events and enormous sacrifices. The first theosophical group in the Russian empire was founded by the aunt of H. P. Blavatsky, N. Fadeyev, in Odessa. And from 1893-1895, M. Gustav Zorn, a prosperous merchant, was, as secretary, the link with the Theosophical Headquar-

ters ("Adyar"), Madras, India. In the great cities, theosophical teachings were banned by the Censor in spite of the interest aroused among those in high society. Thus, a Russian Grand Duke used to have smuggled in a copy of *Lucifer*, the magazine edited in India by his countryman, H. P. Blavatsky. And, interestingly, the future Russian Tsar Nicholas II while traveling around the world in the imperial yacht, visited Madras in January 1891 and inquired about Adyar from his learned assistant and well-known Orientalist, E. Ouhomsky, who was a great admirer of H. P. Blavatsky.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, Theosophy was unknown in Russia, although its teachings had been given to the West by a Russian woman. This strange fact is explained in two ways by a prominent theosophist, Helena Pissareff. At the head of the Church stood the Ober-Procuror of the Holy Synod who forbade the publication of anything which was not in perfect agreement with the dogmas of the Orthodox Church.

The second reason is that H. P. Blavatsky, who had been born and educated in southern Russia, lived mostly abroad and was quite unknown in the large cultural centres of Russia. The one source of information about her and her activities was the book published in Russia by her personal enemy, Vsevolod Solovieff, who depicted her as a charlatan and an adventuress. Owing to all this, no single voice was heard in Russia in praise of her until in 1908 there appeared the Russian translation of *The Voice of the Silence*, with a preface written by the translator, Helen Pissareff, which showed something of the true greatness of H.P.B. It should be mentioned, also, that V. Solovieff's brother, Vladimir, the celebrated philosophical leader of the Russian spiritual renaissance, expressed his deep respect for H.P.B.

The pioneers of Theosophy in Russia, as if following the tradition started by H. P. Blavatsky, were women. A Miss Nina de Gernet, for instance, attended all the Theosophical Congresses and little by little she introduced theosophical books into Russia. These she kept in a locked box in St. Petersburg, in the home of Anna Kamensky, a friend from school days in Geneva. An unexpected incident in the personal life of Anna Kamensky gave the first impulse to the Theosophical Movement in Russia. In her busy life of teaching and earning money for the support of her family, as well as giving of her spare time to work in the People's University, she had not been able to pay much attention to the ideas which Miss de Gernet urged her to study; but an accident which befell her in 1899 provided the opportunity she needed. Returning home one evening, she slipped and broke her leg. A month of idleness in bed followed, during which



she suddenly remembered about the mysterious box and asked her friend, Miss Cecile Helmboldt, to bring one of the books. It happened to be Annie Besant's *In the Outer Court*. That same year, Anna Kamensky entered the Theosophical Society, joining the British Section, and in 1902, she went to London to meet Mrs. Besant. Anna dreamed of a Theosophical Society in Russia, and, here and there, tiny groups were formed by devoted women until the Theosophical Society became an accomplished fact (on Nov. 12, 1908).

For the Russians, the eternal questions relating to conscience form the background for everything.

Of the two causes which led to the spread of Theosophy in Russia, one was the character and capacity of her who later became the chief figure in the Russian Theosophical Movement. The other cause must be sought in the peculiar psychology of the Russian people, which distinguishes them from Western Europe bringing them closer to the East, and especially to India. For the Russians, the eternal questions relating to conscience form the background for everything. From this comes the Idealism of the Intelligentsia, and also the many conflicts which afflict the Russian soul. From the time that Peter the Great abolished the Patriarchs, the church became an instrument of government. But there was still a passionate search for something to satisfy the soul. The struggle of the Russian Intelligentsia with the reactionary government, and the movements for greater freedom, which preceded the Revolution of 1917, had as their basis a religious character.

Anna Kamensky, who from the start was chosen as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Russia, introduced the democratic element into the proceedings, and encouraged personal initiative in the various theosophical groups. In 1907, there took place on the estate of M. and Mme. Pissareff, at Podborki, the first Summer School, which was repeated every year until 1918, when the estates of the nobility were confiscated and mostly destroyed. Although the members of the society were for the most part neither rich nor leisured, they

all responded to the call. From Kiev, Rostov, Moscow, Kharkov, Poltava, and Petersburg delegates flocked to take part in the great work. Neither length of journey, expense, nor business, was allowed to stand in the way, for Theosophy had become the main purpose of their existence. Our Theosophical Movement had no regular means of support, no funds or subsidy, but even before it became an established Society, we began publishing a monthly Review - *The Theosophical Messenger* - which continued to appear regularly until the time of the Revolution. It resembled *The Theosophist* in size and format.

The work in Russia had difficulties unknown in the West, for the Government looked askance at all private societies. But, it was not only the Government that was hostile; in social circles also there was a good deal of opposition. One of these was the Religio-Philosophical Society led by prominent writers and thinkers who did not accept Theosophy, believing it to be a "foreign" movement. The other was the Neo-Christian which believed that Theosophy was anti-Christian. When the Russian public began to show signs of considerable interest in Theosophy, the leader of the Religio-Philosophical Society in Petersburg commenced to attack the Theosophical Society at their meetings. Anna Kamensky offered them a lecture on *Divine Humanity*, a grand discussion followed, the attack on Theosophy being led by the writers Y. Ivanov, D. Philosophov, and D. Merejkovsky. But the clear and able presentment of the teachings and the quiet dignity of the speakers for Theosophy won the day. A public debate on similar lines was held in Moscow, between Theosophists and the Neo-Christians, with A. Kamensky as Chairman, and again Theosophy was victorious.

But, more trouble was in store; this time from the Government. In 1911 *Vestnik Theosofi* (*The Theosophical Messenger*) was suspended by the Censor, Anna Kamensky as editor being charged with blasphemy. This was on account of an article in the Journal on *Christian Mysticism* by Princess Karaggia, in which the Christian Church was criticized from having too easily canonized some of its saints, such as the Emperor Constantine. The trial was held

in May 1912 when the prosecutor charged Anna with offence against the Saints and "blasphemy," adding that such an article was a danger to Church and State. In her defence, Anna gave a brief summary of theosophical teachings and described the trend of the magazine. In the name of freedom of thought and creed recently proclaimed by high authority, she asked that the *Vestnik* be exonerated from the unjust accusation. After an hour's consideration the Jury returned a verdict of "not guilty."

"If you knew our teachings, you would understand that we can only speak the truth, even if it is dangerous." - Anna Kamensky

In the Spring of 1915, another crisis arose. During the European war, the Pacifists in Russia, as elsewhere, refused to take part, spreading propaganda against war. Theosophists felt the defence of the Motherland to be a duty, but amongst the members were two "Tolstoians" who had signed the declaration against war. The police were informed and Anna Kamensky was called to the Third Department of the Secret Police which dealt with political affairs. It was a terrible institution of the old regime. Miss Cecile Helmboldt, the secretary of the T.S. and faithful friend of Anna Kamensky, resolved to accompany her, although she had received no summons. When Anna asked the reason for her summons, the Colonel did not reply, but offered her a chair and continued to write as if nobody else was in the room. So Anna opened her *Bhagavad Gita* which she always carried with her, and quietly began to read. It was evidently the method of the institution to exhaust the patience of the victim and then to terrorize him by a severe interrogation. So the Colonel wrote and Anna read! At last he rose and put before her a paper asking for information as to her birth, occupation, etc. The Colonel asked to see the T.S. Register, which Miss Helmboldt showed him. He did not find there the name of any suspect person. He next inquired if she had been tried in Court. She related the "Vestnik" affair. In reply then to his question whether she was quite sincere and not hiding anything, she said: "If you knew our teaching you would understand that we can only speak the truth, even

if it is dangerous for us." "This I have noticed" he observed. Thus, his interest was aroused and he asked what Theosophy had to say about war. Anna replied that Theosophy worked for peace and hoped that the time would come when there would be no more war, but if the Motherland was in danger it was one's duty to defend her. She told him about the *Bhagavad Gītā* and referred him to various articles in the *Vestnik*. In the end the Colonel asked her to send him the magazine and dismissed both her and Miss Helmboldt with a deep bow.

"Even in the far North life can be happy if you live in the light of the spirit, but if you choose to remain in darkness life everywhere will be miserable." - Cecile Helmboldt

In 1920, when all forward movements in Russia were suspended, the "Red" police visited the T.S. Headquarters and searched the room of Anna Kamensky. The officer had a warrant for her arrest, but she was out of town in a sanitarium. Throughout the search, Miss Helmboldt, Secretary of the Society, showed wonderful presence of mind and self control. The police found nothing suspicious; however, they took many papers and letters. A few days later Anna received an order to go to the G.P.U., which had replaced the Third Department. Again her devoted friend, Miss Helmboldt, came to the rescue and paid a visit to the G.P.U. to explain that Anna was unwell and out of town. She pleaded with the agent that at least a week's grace should be given to her friend before asking her to go out in the icy weather. His reply was that before long both she and her friend would be sent to the far north where they could do as they liked. Miss Helmboldt replied: "Even in the far North life can be happy if you live in the life of the Spirit, but if you choose to remain in darkness life will be miserable everywhere." The agent seemed struck by these words, for he stopped shouting at her and wrote a "pass" which stated that A. Kamensky would receive another summons which must be obeyed in a week.

She could freely teach Theosophy but one condition was attached: she must proclaim that there is no God and that all religion is a lie.

A week later the ladies went together to the G.P.U. They were taken to the office of the Judge of Instruction and there asked to fill out a "questionnaire." (Miss Helmboldt was sent to another room.) One of the questions was "what is your point of view on the Community?" The same reply was given by each of them to the effect that a Spiritual Community was one of the Theosophical Ideals for the future. Then followed a severe cross questioning, individually and separately, which lasted 5 hours. The agent tried to terrorize them. He called them "the people's enemies," accused them of disloyal intrigues, and threatened them with prison and exile, if they did not sincerely confess all their crimes. They replied that they had always worked loyally for the good of the community, but that at present all their work had been halted. The "Red" officer then changed his tone and began to try to wheedle them. To Anna he offered a post as head of a new spiritual academy, where she could freely teach Theosophy, but one condition was attached: she must proclaim that there is no God and that all religion is a lie. Of course, she refused. His proposition to Miss Helmboldt was to become a minister of Education. When she suggested that she had not the requisite knowledge for such a post, he said: "Nonsense, we take a peasant from the fields and make him a minister, he never refuses." Her answer was: "The peasant does not know what it means and therefore does not realize his responsibility, but I know a little and cannot therefore accept." Thereupon the officer gave them a "pass" and promised to return the papers they had taken, but of course this was never done. Anna and her friend were happy to escape from such a hell and to return home. They were advised, however, by their friends, to disappear as quickly as possible from Petersburg for if Anna was summoned again to the G.P.U. she would not escape a second time.

The T.S. Headquarters was closed and sealed and the idea then arose of organizing a community in the country. The proprietor of an estate (Karavaevka) invited Anna and her friends to come and live in her house, situated 30 km. from the famous Troietsky-Sergievsky Monastery built by the great Saint Sergius Radonezhsky, who played a great part

in Russian history. At night they arrived at the estate which was in the midst of woods and fields. Mrs. Zimina received them and gave them four rooms. She was a doctor and well-loved by the peasants who in gratitude for her constant care and service brought her food. Her dream was a theosophical community. Her husband, a well-known member of the Cooperative Movement, had built a "People's Palace" and started a cooperative farm, mill, and boot-shop. He offered the "People's Palace" as a centre for a theosophical community.

Anna and her friends accepted with joy and organized an association of Arts and Crafts which was joined by five others who came from Moscow and Kaluga: its aim was to interest and help the peasant women. The community worked busily. On Sundays there were lectures, talks and concerts in the "People's Palace," and later when a famous organizer of peasant arts, Mrs. Pogosky, joined the community, there were exhibitions of arts and crafts. The work was carried on with energy and enthusiasm through the summer, autumn and part of the winter, until the building of the "People's Palace" became too cold for meetings. During the winter evenings when light had to be used sparingly, the members of the Community sat in darkness to discuss various problems of life in the light of Theosophy.

Next Spring the "Red" wave reached Karavaevka. A search was made in the "People's Palace"; books of Leo Tolstoy and his pamphlet against the Death penalty were found. This was declared to be "illegal literature." Mr. Zimina, the people's friend, was declared to be an "enemy of the people," and subsequently arrested and carried off to prison. His wife left the estate to try to find and follow her husband; she also advised her friends to leave for it was certain that at the next "Red" wave they would be in danger. So in 1921 the Community was broken up and its members separated after a year of very happy and successful work in the village.

During the early days of the Revolution, in 1917, when all liberty was suspended, the Russian T.S. had developed great activity. Public meetings were organized in all the towns where there were Lodges or Centres. In Nov. 1918, the annual Convention was held in Pe-

tersburg, delegates coming from all over Russia. This was our last Convention. In 1919, propaganda of all kinds was forbidden, and all societies, except those organized by the Soviets, were closed. The T.S., although only officially closed in 1922, had to suspend its work, as all Meetings, whether public or private were forbidden.

July 1918 was the last issue of our magazine, in which three chapters of a translation of Annie Besant's *Esoteric Christianity* made their appearance. The publication of all magazines and books was prohibited. A new edition of Krishnamurti's *At the Feet of the Master* had been prepared, but the Soviet power *did not allow it to be published*. Miss Helmboldt tried to persuade the Chief Commissioner (the Censor) to allow its publication. His reply was: "We do not need such books and we forbid it." The same thing happened with the T.S. cooperative press; first came the order that no workman was allowed to work in the printing room. So several T.S. members took on the job, and for a time continued to print cards and small pamphlets - the last of these being a miniature edition of *Light on the Path* by Mabel Collins. But, such a condition could not last long.

The Soldiers were at first very rough but by degrees they were impressed by the gentleness and courage of the theosophists.

One day "Red" soldiers came with agents from the G.P.U., arrested the theosophists whom they found at work and led them to the Revolutionary Tribunal. It was a long way. The soldiers were at first very rough, but by degrees they were impressed by the courage and gentleness of their prisoners. They asked questions about Theosophy and theosophical activities and began to give advice as to how to reply to the questions of the Tribunal. They even offered some of their bread. The trial which began with screams and insults, ended with a verdict of "not guilty"; the judge evidently being impressed by the serenity, patience, and goodwill of the accused. He ordered the return of the confiscated books and the printing press. The accused were set free, but in spite of what

had been ordered, the press remained sealed and the books never returned. Thus T.S. members found all doors closed for their activities. They made several attempts to work in Soviet institutions, schools and hospitals, but after a short time they always found themselves excluded. No reason being given, they were left without bread or salary.

All the leagues formed by the T.S. were destroyed. For instance, the T.S. had in 1918 formed a great educational association, called *The Educational League of the Free Citizen*, which worked in many towns organizing lectures, meetings, concerts, study courses, and proclaiming that the welfare of the country depended upon the inner culture of its citizens. This association had a Youth section, which formed Branches in several Colleges. This fine work was stopped. Another association formed by the T.S. in 1919 was the *Religio-Philosophical Union* which invited representatives of different faiths and different spiritual movements to collaborate for the help of the community. They accepted the formula drawn up by the T.S., namely: "Unity of God, Brotherhood of man, Service to the world." Priests of different sects joined the Union and agreed to work along these lines. But very soon the work was prohibited.

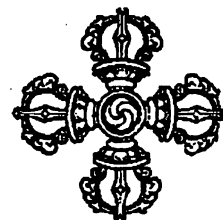
The Terror became fiercer with every day. Many theosophists were sent to prison and into exile. At last, in June 1921, Anna Kamensky, Cecile Helmboldt, and Mme. Poushchine fled from Russia. The story of their flight is interesting. There were in existence several secret organizations which helped people to cross the frontier, and one of these was chosen. On June 1st, 1921, after a night spent in the woods, with only enough belongings and food to ensure survival, our friends crossed in safety the river which formed the boundary between Russia and Finland. Although the dangers were great, they had no fear, but felt a wonderful sense of protection. At 6 a.m., they arrived at a peasant's cottage in Finland, and from there were taken to the quarantine office, where they remained for a couple of weeks. Dr. Sonck, the devoted General Secretary of the Finnish T.S. visited and helped them in every possible way, inviting them to the Headquarters at Helsingfors. Here a group of members

met and welcomed them at the station; seeing their bedraggled condition, they wept. Surrounded by the loving care of the Finnish brethren, the Russian leaders remained several weeks in Finland and were present at the annual Convention in Iggelby. Then, having obtained a passport for Belgium, they moved on to Brussels.

Thus ended the activities of the Theosophical Society in Russia. Begun in the first years of the century and gaining government recognition in 1908, it was destroyed by the Bolsheviks in 1918. The members fled from Russia and were scattered throughout the world. Others who remained in Russia went through a terrible misery; some were thrown into prison, some sent into exile, or to do forced labor, and many have passed away. But, the life of the Russian T.S. was not finished. As soon as Anna Kamensky and Cecile Helmboldt were safely abroad and resettled in Switzerland (where the former had received her education, and where Mrs. Besant wished her to live and work), they began to receive letters and inquiries from Russian refugees from all parts of the world. Thus they made contact with their fellow countrymen exiled from Russia and with them began to form new Centres. Anna began the publication of the small journal - *Vestnik* - which soon became a connecting link for all Russian theosophists. The Russian branch of the T.S. outside Russia functioned successfully since 1926, but in 1938 it was dissolved by the international T.S. board.

Recently the Russian T.S. has risen from seeming death and is carrying on its work with energy and enthusiasm, knowing that the dissemination of theosophical, pluralistic, universalist thought among our people is a preparation also for the cultural resurrection of Russia.

(Main Source: *The Archives*, The International Theosophical Headquarters, Adyar, Madras, India.)



TOWARD A TRUE SCIENCE OF A LIVING UNIVERSE

by Willy Schmit

A. O. Hume, who just like A. P. Sinnett received several letters from the Adept-Brothers, was a scientist. As he said, there were few branches of science with which he did not possess more or less acquaintance.

The first letter he received from Master K. H. was dated November 1st, 1880[†] and is a lengthy answer to the many questions he had posed. So, he wanted to learn from the Adept-Brothers true Science, the occult aspect of the known side of nature. The answer he receives is, that this is not so easy.

You do not seem to realize the tremendous difficulties in the way of imparting even the rudiments of *our* Science to those who have been trained in the familiar methods of *yours*. You do not see that the more you have of the one the less capable you are of intuitively comprehending the other, for a man can only think in his worn grooves, and unless he has the courage to fill up these and make new ones for himself he must perforce travel on the old lines.

Some instances are given.

In conformity with exact modern Science you would define but one cosmic energy, and see no difference between the energy expended by the traveller who pushes aside the bush that obstructs his path, and the scientific experimenter who expends an equal amount of energy in setting a pendulum in motion! We do. For we know there is a world of difference between the two. The one uselessly dissipates or scatters force, the other concentrates and stores it. And here please understand that I do not refer to the relative utility of the two as one might imagine; but only to the fact, that in the one case, there is but brute force flung out without any transmutation of that brute energy into the higher potential form of spiritual dynamics, and, in the other there is just that. Please do not consider me vaguely metaphysical. The idea I wish to convey is, that the result of the highest

intellection in the scientifically occupied brain is the evolution of a sublimated form of spiritual energy, which, in the cosmic action, is productive of illimitable results, while the automatically acting brain holds or stores up in itself only a certain quantum of brute force that is unfruitful of benefit for the individual or humanity.

In the above is explained that energy works on several planes, in its brute form in the case of the pushing aside of the bush, in its intellectual form in the case of the setting in motion of a pendulum. This intellectual energy is immediately connected with an ethical principle: it must be of benefit for the individual or humanity. We have to remember herewith that ethics is the foundation of whole nature, or otherwise said, that everything is connected with everything else and cooperates with all things.

The other instance deals with the unlimited possibilities the adept has at his disposal for the control of matter by means of his creative faculties. It is also an exposition of the fact that this highest form of energy, the spiritual, is as high above the merely intellectual use of energy as the latter stands above the instinctive one.

The human brain is an exhaustless generator of the most refined quality of cosmic force, out of the low, brute energy of nature, and the complete adept has made himself a centre from which irradiate potentialities that beget correlations upon correlations through Aeons to come. This is the key to the mystery of his being able to project into and materialize in the visible world the forms that his imagination has constructed out of inert cosmic matter in the invisible world. The adept does not create anything new, but only utilizes and manipulates materials which nature has in store around him; a material which throughout eternities has passed through all the forms; he has but to choose the one he wants and recall it into objective existence. Would not this sound to one of your 'learned' biologists like a madman's dream?

And then there is the article: "Morality and Pantheism," also dealing with the conception of energy (BCW, V, 337-39):

You cannot be one with *ALL*, unless all your acts, thoughts and feelings synchronize with the onward march of nature. . . . The human spirit is in its highest state of activity in *samādhi*, and not, as is generally supposed, in a dormant quiescent condition. And moreover, it will be easily seen by anyone who examines the nature of occult dynamics, that a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence. When an adept has placed himself *en rapport* with the universal mind he becomes a real power in nature. Even on the objective plane of existence the difference between brain and muscular energy, in their capacity of producing wide-spread and far-reaching results, can be very easily perceived. The amount of physical energy expended by the discoverer of the steam engine might not have been more than that expended by a hard-working day-labourer. But the practical results of the coolie's work can never be compared with the results achieved by the discovery of the steam engine. Similarly the ultimate effects of spiritual energy are infinitely greater than those of intellectual energy.

Continuing our reading of the letter to A.O. Hume:

But will you permit me to sketch for you still more clearly the difference between the modes of-physical called exact—often out of mere politeness—and metaphysical sciences? The latter, as you know, being incapable of verification before mixed audiences, is classed by Mr. Tyndall with the fictions of poetry. The realistic science of fact, on the other hand, is utterly prosaic. Now for us poor and unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of *moral* results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. And what, in its proud isolation, can be more utterly indifferent to everyone and everything, or more bound to nothing, but the selfish requisites for its advancement than this materialistic and realistic science of fact? What care they for MAN as an isolated atom of this great and harmonious Whole, even though they may sometimes be of practical use to him?

Here Tyndall is mentioned, a physicist and an authority in his day, classing metaphysical sciences with the fictions of poetry. Mme. Blavatsky writes sometimes appreciatively about him, when she says for instance that he speaks as an occultist (BCW, V, 162), but her answer is right to the point when this same Tyndall declares in his *Science and Man* that "Metaphysics will be welcomed when it abandons its pretensions to scientific discovery, and consents to be ranked as a kind of poetry."

Her answer:

Physics will always be welcomed when it abandons its pretension to psychological discovery. The physicists will have to consent to be regarded in a near future as no more than supervisors and analysts of physical results, who have to leave the spiritual causes to those who believe in them. (BCW, II, 158)

Could it be said more clearly than here that Metaphysics, occult Science, is Absolute Science, the complete one, and in every respect the elder of modern Science, which, compared with the former, is a mere child.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, at the end of the first part, we find the chapter: "Summary of the Mutual Position" (S.D., I, 669). Let modern scientists and students of the age-old Theosophia jointly tackle this chapter and ask themselves earnestly and honestly if, since 1888, the year of publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, there has occurred a *substantial* change?

Chemistry is mentioned in this first letter, with an allusion to the difference it makes between organic and inorganic substance. The theosophical teaching says that nowhere in Nature can there will be found dead matter, briefly stated in the S.D. as follows:

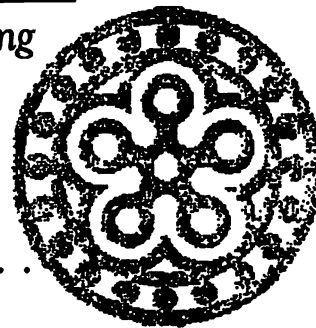
There is no such thing in Nature as *inorganic* substances or bodies. Stones, minerals, rocks, and even chemical 'atoms' are simply organic units in

profound lethargy. Their coma has an end and their inertia becomes activity. (S.D., I, 626 fn)

Further on in the letter the Master gives again an exposition about energy in its manifold forms, with emphasis on the ethical aspect of thoughts.

We see a vast difference between the qualities of two equal amounts of energy expended by two men, of whom one, let us suppose, is on his way to his daily quiet work, and another on his way to denounce a fellow creature at the police station, while the men of science see none. And we - not they - see a specific difference between the energy in the motion of the wind and that of a revolving wheel. And why? Because every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and becomes an active entity by associating itself - coalescing, we might term it - with an elemental; that is to say with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence, a creature of the mind's begetting, for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man

... every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and becomes an active entity by associating itself - coalescing, we might term it - with an elemental . . . It survives as an active intelligence.



is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offsprings of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions, a current which reacts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes in contact with it in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls this his 'Skandha,' the Hindu gives it the name of 'Karma'; the Adept evolves these shapes consciously, other men throw them off unconsciously.

The ethical aspect of true Science is again stressed in the following passage. Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, philanthropy, therefore can make no claim upon our help, until it blends itself with the metaphysics. Being but a cold classification of facts outside man, and existing before and after him, her domain of usefulness ceases for us at the outer boundary of these facts; and whatever the inferences and results for humanity from the materials acquired by her methods, she little cares. Therefore as our sphere lies entirely outside hers - as far as the path of *Uranus* is outside the earth's - we distinctly refuse to be broken on any wheel of her construction.

Superficially considered it could perhaps be argued that modern science, exact as well as nonexact, has by now done much in many fields to ameliorate the destiny of mankind, and in doing so has become more ethical, but going deeper into the matter we must conclude that the words of the Master are still valid.

Throughout the whole letter it can be discerned that *true* science cannot be separated from *true* philosophy and *true* religion. The three are one, three aspects of the same, Nature in its visible

and invisible forms. Stress is laid on the fact that only Asiatic psychology can supply the needed evidence.

The letter ends with the warning, that "this is the

moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age toward extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive and soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans."

And then there is the challenge: You and your colleagues may help furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault because

itself the finality of absolute science; and, a religion, that is indeed worthy of the name, since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice?

Where then is this so-called 'obsolescence' of the S.D., as some believe, when it is so clearly stated how modest the role is that modern science plays in the so much greater Whole, the age-old Theosophia, the Wisdom of the gods?

[†]This letter is not included in *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, but is to be found in "Combined Chronology" by Margaret Conger, edited by TUP.

RELIGION BEHIND ALL RELIGIONS

The following is extracted from the section "In the Light of Theosophy," in the July 1992 issue of *The Theosophical Movement*, Bombay, India.

It is often said that religion is losing ground in the modern world. This is put down to its failure to move with the times. Yet there are more cogent reasons—primarily, the impotence of religion, as generally understood, to meet man's spiritual requirements, or even to offer a rational explanation of life.

"Religion and Human Welfare" is the theme of Swati Datta's prize-winning essay in the Bhagawat Swarup Aggarwal Memorial Essay Competition. It is published in *Bhavan's Journal* for April 15.

It is necessary to realize [she observes] that religion can be viewed from a restricted as well as a wider perspective. In a limited sense, it tends to succumb readily to degeneration.... "What mean and cruel things men do for the love of God!" says Somerset Maugham. Pascal confirms this when he observes, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

Indeed, the history of religion is also the history of persecutions. Wars have been fought in its name. Often progress has been halted and hampered. Dogmatism and bigotry have denied freedom of movement and thought. The so-called "religion" has led to hatred, hostility, poverty, untouchability, fatalism, communalism, and slavery. It has also bred fanaticism and fundamentalism. Exploitation of the masses on religious grounds is global and widespread...

However, religion has a wider horizon, a larger heart, and a fuller meaning. Bacon once said: "A little philosophy

inclineth men's minds to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to Religion." It is not to this or that religion to which we all must ideally turn, but to the Religion behind all religions, not to what divides men but to what unites them.

As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has remarked, "A religion ceases to be a universal faith if it does not make universal men." . . . Religion then is an inward transformation, a spiritual change which involves the overcoming of the discords within our own nature as well as those outside us. Viewed in

Pascal confirms this when he observes, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

this context, religion is the binding force which strengthens and deepens the solidarity of human society . . .

Everything in this world has an essential property, an inherent quality of its own without which it cannot exist. This is "dharma"—"religion." It consists solely in realization. Man cannot be man if he has no human qualities in him. For mankind there is only one universal religion, and that is "humanism"—a feeling of love for all and malice towards none. It is this religion that promotes peace, welfare and understanding and does not spread duality and enmity. Men must rise to the realm of this true religion and experience its essential, celestial

rhythm. They must make religion an Odyssey to the Supreme, the Endless Beyond. Only through such an approach can our present fragmented world become a paradise of perfected relationships.

Man hungers for a way of life that will make him a better human being. He may allow his mind to be lulled by the emotion-evoking service at a church, a temple, a mosque, or a synagogue, but the soul's hunger for the ever-receding unattainable is sure to arise as man emerges from the stage of blind belief to the light of Devotion. To the soul, dogmatism, ritual, bigotry and cant are not devotion, they are all loathsome and meaningless. In spite of the church or the temple, many have recognized at times the possibility of their own progression and perfection. They feel even in their debased consciousness some urge of divinity. One who senses that the soul can attain the universal perception, divine in depth and therefore complete, needs neither church, prayer nor priest, and is bound to turn away from these. For

such a one, as his life deepens and his consciousness expands, "every gesture becomes a *Mudrā*, every word a *Mantra* and every incident a Message." Earth itself becomes his mystic temple, and "the earth's business all a kind of worship." He may not succeed in practising it continuously, but he has caught the vision.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUFISM

by K. M. P. Mohamed Cassim, Ph. D.

Many people accept as inevitable the changes which come in the course of material progress, but are reluctant to accept changes that affect them personally, which upset their established way of life, their manner of thinking and conceptions of things. Few realize that the key to successful living lies in the ability to adapt to changing situations. The physical world is considered as real, but only the physical senses perceive it as such. The aim of Sufism is to bring about certain changes in man's consciousness wherein he transcends the limitation of physical existence. When our state of consciousness rises to the stage where our awareness of ourselves as oneness with essence of reality (Dhat) is realized, then only will it enable us to claim the attainment of spiritual liberation. According to Sufism we can never perceive the Truth (*Haqq*) with a conditioned mind. We cannot attain liberation until our ego (*Nafs*) is dissolved. Sufism holds the view that the way to go beyond the conditioned mind is only through self-knowledge which means by extensive awareness and stillness of the mind which will ultimately dissolve all delusions.

All human beings are in search of happiness in some form or other. Our quest for happiness continues unabated, though its entire attraction keeps on shifting from time to time. The craving is never satisfied because ego is the personification of our desire and a conglomeration of sense-experiences which take the form of pleasant or unpleasant psychological memory. Man's outlook must change with the acceptance of spiritual values as a guide to behavior. Sense-experiences affect our mental process in a subtle way causing feelings of attraction and repulsion. Justification or condemnation creates a sort of whirlpool of duality in which our life is caught up. Sense-experiences get crystallized psychological memory which projects the past into the present and tarnishes it with numerous preconceived notions and prejudices. False ego makes us view the present through the screen of the past and it also projects into the

future in the form of hopes and fears which of their very nature are illusory in character. This assertion of psychological memory with its ego complex is the conditioned mind.

The main point in Sufism is as to how one should live in detachment. Mind alone is the cause of the bondage and freedom of the soul. By the attachment of the mind to the world we become bound. Give up all ideas of me and mine for thus alone is the heart purified and so freed from lust, greed and delusion. Detachment will help the unfoldment of devotion and devotion will help confirmation in detachment. When detachment and dispassion are practised rightly one can rest assured that the discharge of duties in the world can only be helpful to spiritual progress. If one dons the garb of a monk, goes out in the forest, but carries in his mind attachment for things, he will see no better things in the forest than the world. He will create a new worldly environment in the forest. If one lives in the world, wears the habit of common people of the world, does the usual round of duties of life yet it is possible to be detached from all things.

The great practical value of Sufism is that it gives meaning to life and purpose to physical existence. It replaces confusion with knowledge and doubt and despair with confidence and hope. It bestows mental serenity upon those who actually practise it and makes possible the realization of Reality. Sufism offers man not only a philosophy, but a code of conduct and a way of life which can be used as a foundation upon which to build spiritual freedom. When the basic cardinal principles are fully understood and assimilated it changes the aspects of life so completely enabling one to enjoy perfect Peace and the capacity to distinguish between Reality and illusion. The great task is to discover Reality on the basis of one's own inner experience. Further, it is in the process of one's life only that the discovery of Divinity must be made as otherwise there can be no realization.

Sufism points out that every religion is a unique contribution to the spiritual life of humanity. It is very essential that a seeker must respect and admire the mystical approach of various religions by honestly accepting the different forms of expression so that one will be able

to appreciate the underlying harmony of all religions. After all religious harmony is not based on sameness, but on co-operation and mutual understanding. If one is burdened with wrong theories and dogmas one cannot perceive the Truth and hence one must dissolve all prejudices which twist and cloud one's mental vision so that one could approach many problems without any particular form of conditioning. It is to be realized that nothing impedes man's healthy inner growth like fear and suspicion. Without detachment we can never get rid of fear. We are always afraid of losing the things to which we are attached. The root of all these harmful weaknesses is attachment. Sufism says that through the practice of detachment alone can we regain the true awareness of Fana. Sufism gives the technique so as to get the best out of life without being enslaved and degraded. Sufism teaches how to live in the world in a way which does not hurt the people and at the same time makes spiritual progress possible. It is absolutely true that all our sufferings and bondages of life have their source in our attachment. Our work for society cannot really do good to others unless it is unselfish, couched in detachment.

The outer world is nothing but a reflection of one's attitude; if the very structure of one's individual life is not free from confusion one cannot establish a harmonious relationship outwardly. Therefore, until and unless one develops a high degree of mental detachment by rigorous discipline and relentless effort one will not be able to progress in releasing self from imprisonment of illusion. A small mistake committed in a weak moment is enough to wreck what one has spiritually accomplished with diligence and perseverance. The most stupendous task is to observe everything in its purity which means to see all without attachment, without identification and distortion. Self-realization or to know Reality is to understand oneself, the spiritual depth of one's being. Man need only transcend his suffocating ego to discover his true being in the Divine. Those who have been successful in the discovery of this divine in the Beyond are untouched by the vicissitudes of life and become absolutely free of all conditioning; they are at peace with themselves and with the world around them.

They become a source of joy, inspiration and peace.

As the human intellect develops, man's powers of comprehension increase and in this connection the study of Sufism assists each one to discover Divinity. Man's first move towards attaining the state of Supreme Consciousness is to dispose of his material outlook and to seek the spiritual Truth. The pursuit of Truth is purely an inward pilgrimage and one must finally come to realize that to attain inner tranquility one must be alert and sensitive not to waste mental energy through any kind of conflicts and tensions. In other words, while one is observing various psychological reactions one must be in a state of non-identification. A real seeker or Murid is not one who knows all, but he who has come

to realize that the utility of knowledge is the ability to live peacefully and happily in the day-to-day affairs. Man seeks happiness in the external world, whereas Divinity lies within himself. It has to be intuitively experienced inwardly. We cannot think of Reality and find it.

The philosophy of Sufism extols meditation (*Muraqabah*) as a way of Self-realization. The blissful state of meditation can be experienced only when the entire thought-process is erased and transcended; then only is it possible for one to contact that which gives spiritual perfection. In Fana the mind is fully aware and completely negative. It sees things as they are without accepting or rejecting, which means, our mental functions of justification and condemnation cease to be in this state and our

mind becomes alert, extra active and yet empty. In Fana our mind is stripped of everything including the false self and then it is liberated and is in communion with the absolute Reality. Actually, in Fana we go on eliminating image after image till we reach a point beyond which there is no going. The Sufis have revealed the essence of life as the Truth and the Truth remains constant. Only one's perception of it varies according to one's capacity to comprehend. It is to be realized that Truth stands alone and when it is known one is spiritually free.

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LOYALTY AND LEADERSHIP

by Christmas Humphreys¹

THIS question involves an examination of the relationship between three allied, yet distinct, concepts. The first of these is the difference between a principle and its application, which is tantamount to that between abstract and concrete; the second involves the doctrine of what we will loosely call self-dependence or self-determination; and the third is expressed in that most abused of terms—loyalty.

Abstract and Concrete.—The Theosophy of to-day is, unfortunately, becoming more and more materialistic, and one of the causes would appear to be this: The Theosophical Society offers to the World a body of general principles, purporting to be fragments of the Eternal Wisdom. Some student of Theosophy applies one of these principles to a particular set of facts, according to his own interpretation thereof. This is as it should be. But this crystallized fragment of a general principle, colored by the individual interpretation of the student, is placidly accepted by those too lazy to think for themselves and by them propagated as being a principle of Theosophy. Hence formulae of conduct and dogmas on every topic, which are to all, save the original student, as dead

and meaningless as any other form of dogma. For example, it is a principle of Theosophy that there is but One Life. It follows, says one student upon thinking the matter over, that we must not wear leather boots. This is his application to personal attire of the conception of the Unity of Life. But it is not Theosophy in the sense of being given to the world as a fragment of the Law. Yet there are many who will tell us that "Theosophy lays down that we must not wear leather boots." The principles are there, let each student imbibe them and apply them for himself, but let him at the same time leave others free to do likewise. Let us suggest to one another, by all means, ways in which any given principle may be applied, but let us avoid dogmatizing, for each must ultimately be his own interpreter of the law. In short, let Theosophy be given to the world upon higher mental or conceptual levels, as a body of ideas or principles, and let the application of them be left adaptable to the needs and special viewpoint of all who seek Truth along any line whatever.

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Self-determination.—Having raised the discussion to a level of principle, let us proceed.

Now it is submitted that there is only one form of true loyalty, and that is Self-loyalty, or loyalty to the Self. We must therefore first examine the doctrine of self-determination, which, for the purposes of this article, may be cited as the cryptic proposition "I am I," and all that flows therefrom. This amounts to identification with the Ego or Higher Self, which may be considered as the relatively permanent part of one's being as opposed to its temporary vehicles of expression, or personality. Among other considerations which logically follow from our first premise, is the refusal to submit to any discipline from whatever source, save what is imposed by the Self or Ego on the self, the not-Self, the personality. Secondly, and almost as a corollary of the above, the necessity of perfect control of the personality by the Ego. Finally, and for our purposes perhaps most important of all, the inherent right to lay down a line of conduct for oneself, and to follow it unswervingly, so long as it does not infringe an equal right in others.

Loyalty.—This following of the Self becomes of paramount importance, and all other considerations must give way before it. Such at any rate would appear to be the law of the Great Ones. The Master "M" writing to A. P. Sinnett on

the subject of discipleship, lays down in terms that "only those who have proved faithful to themselves and Truth through everything will be allowed further intercourse with us.² Is not this the fundamental quality of "an honorable man," and who for one moment can in its absence be trusted? Truly Polonius spoke for all time when he advised Laertes:

This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

But by being untrue to the Self there arises an internal conflict, the self vainly lying to the Self, and experiencing considerable discomfort from that factor which can never be quite ignored, the memory of past error known as conscience. Every idealist understands the nature of Self-loyalty. Suppose that I try to be loyal to some ideal. Then to whom am I loyal in following that ideal? My Ego, my Self. For it is the Ego that is an idealist, not the personality. Does it not logically follow that by being loyal to the ideal I am but being loyal or true to myself?

Let us now consider the nature of what is called "personal loyalty." This occurs when some person decides to be loyal to some other person, and to "stand by" him or her, come what may. Such personal loyalty should be the effect of an unseen cause, not a cause in itself. It should be the result of the harmonious co-operation of two Egos rather than the blind following of a personality in total disregard of violated principles. Yet even the greatest have been known to allow themselves to be blinded by the personality of another. Let personalities follow personalities if they will, but when I, the Ego, stoop to pledge my loyalty to a mere personality, however great that personality may be, I have, by so doing, ceased to rely entirely upon my Self, and consequently ceased to be true to my Self. By thus placing my reliance on another I have virtually abdicated from the throne of Self, and thereby renounced my powers of spiritual perception, the power to contact Truth.

The Self follows principles, unalterable Laws, and only the self, the not-Self, follows personalities. How, then, can I be loyal to others and at the same

time "to mine own Self be true?" Is not the answer that the finest loyalty to others is unswerving loyalty to one's Self? Examine this, and it will be found to be true. A man who merely follows personalities cannot be relied upon by the Ego whose personality he elects to follow not to be led off on a new quest at the critical moment by some "more attractive personality." On the other hand, an independent thinker, who follows his own ideals and principles before all else, can always be trusted. For the leader realizes that the follower is working to the same end as he, and that as long as he, the leader, works faithfully towards the ideal he represents in the eyes of his follower, he can rely upon his loyal support. But he knows equally well that if he proves disloyal to the common ideal, as surely will his follower desert him. Thus does the very genuine loyalty of his supporters keep the leader to the lines originally laid down. Blind obedience may be laudable on the battle-field but is of little avail in spiritual evolution.

The one apparent contradiction to this principle proves, upon examination, to be its most perfect illustration. It may be argued: "What of the unswerving devotion of the pupil for his Master?" But is this a case of following a personality? Of course not. It is at least as high a relationship as Ego following Ego, and perhaps something higher still. Have not the Masters in *Light on the Path* defined Themselves as "Symbols of the Higher Self?" It follows that in following the Master the pupil is only being true to his own Self. Nor is the metaphysical explanation of this doctrine of loyalty difficult to understand. There is but one Self, and how can he who is loyal to the fragment of that Self within him be disloyal to any other fragment enshrined in any other human being? Conversely, how can a man by being loyal to something which is not-Self, such as personality, remain true to the One Self? Be loyal to the Self, and the problem of loyalty to others is automatically solved.

Type of Leadership.—There are three

main types of Leadership. Firstly, spiritual leadership, or the devotion of the younger for the older brother in evolution. This, as we have seen, is but a faithful following of the Self within. Secondly, leadership in what may be called the form-side. Such leaders are simply business officials, cogs in the machinery of an organization. These two types are the two extremes. But in between them comes a third. Most collections of people, combining to form a new unit, elect certain of their members to hold a dual position. Such persons hold office on the form-side, and at the same time are respected to a greater or less degree as being spiritual leaders.

Such are at once head of the form, or business-side, and of the life-side from which the organization draws its strength. Now, it is a business maxim that executive officers are elected to act within certain limits, and as long as they keep within those limits they will be obeyed. Otherwise there would be no point in electing them. This ensures the smooth running of the organization. Therefore, to the extent that any leader is a business official acting *intra vires*, you obey him. But to the extent that he is a spiritual leader you, your Ego, are prepared to follow such leader only as long as his path and yours are one. For you, the real You, are primarily pledged to your principles.

Keep the dual capacity of such a leader clear, and the problem of loyalty is solved. And that dual capacity resolves itself in the long run into a question of Ego and personality. On the form-side you obey the elected official, for only so is business done; but on the life-side you follow principles, your Self, and only people in so far as they embody those principles. This distinction leads to a disciplined and smoothly running organization composed of free and independent units—surely the Ideal. For the more independent those units are the more faithfully will they follow both aspects of their leaders. Working only for the good of the whole, they obey on the form-side their officials, *qua* officials, while on the life-side retaining their independence.



Be loyal to the Self, and the problem of loyalty to others is automatically solved.

These principles seem to be clear and unanswerable, but their application is by no means easy. The line of Self-loyalty is seldom, if ever, the line of least resistance. But, though it be a hard road to travel, there are those who prefer its rigours to the "pricks within" from an

ever watchful conscience. For, in following the harder road, you have only the world with which to reckon, but on deviating from it you will find yourself in conflict with the Self. Choose, then, for sooner or later the choice must be made. Self-loyalty is something far greater than mere "ultimate expediency." It is the fundamental principle of conduct, and the road it lays down is the only Right Road in evolution, and one that, come what may, must ultimately be trodden by every evolving soul. Has it not been said:

To follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

These are general principles. Let each apply them for himself.

—from *The Theosophist*, June 1925

NOTES

¹ A Transaction of Youth Lodge, London, whose Members are in no way bound by the opinions of the writer.

² *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Ed., A. T. Barker, 1st Ed., p. 264.

BOOK REVIEWS

HPB THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE AND INFLUENCE OF HELENA BLAVATSKY, FOUNDER OF THE MODERN THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

by Sylvia Cranston.

New York, G.P. Putnam, 1993; 648 pages, Bibliog. & Index. \$30.00

A United Nations director, Dr. Paul Weinzwieg, wrote that HPB was "a completely cultured woman in the renaissance ideal . . . She was a scientist, poet, pianist, painter, philosopher, writer, educator, and above all, a tireless warrior for light."⁰

Although for many Theosophists the details of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's life related in this biography will be familiar, the events unfold with a remarkable flow. It should reach the hearts and minds of many new readers as the first sympathetic, major biography from a prominent publisher in years.

The work encompasses H.P.B.'s influence as well as her life. For instance, she revolutionized occult thinking in Europe and America. She injected into the Darwinian picture of evolution the Consciousness side of spiritual and psychical development. This alone had a tremendous impact on the New Age Movement. Cranston quotes H.P.B.'s definition of "true occultism" in terms of motive. That Blavatsky was the mother of a "New Age," but not its practices of black magic, is clearly illustrated from her article "Practical Occultism," and other passages the author employs throughout her text.¹

In India and Ceylon Blavatsky was

a powerful factor in the Hindu and Buddhist revival. Nearly 100 pages are devoted to her Mission in India! How she aided Sri Lanka's great orator Gunananda in restoring the Buddhist faith by his triumphant debates against Christian missionaries is stirring indeed. HPB's influence also inspired Anagarika Dharmapala's work for the Spiritual resurgence of Asia. In the September 1927 issue of *Asia* magazine, he reminisced about his meeting with H.P.B. as a youth, and how she advised him not to rush to the Himalayan adepts at that time. "It will be much wiser for you to dedicate your life to the service of humanity," she said, "And, first of all, learn Pali, the sacred language of the Buddha."²

H.P.B. also influenced the Indian Independence Movement, as indicated by early sympathizer Allen O. Hume, who later became founder of the Indian National Congress. (Hume also defended Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky against accusations of being mere adventurers, by London's *Saturday Review*.³) Included is a powerful quote from Mahatma Gandhi to his biographer Louis Fischer in which he said, "the top Congressmen were theosophists." . . . "Theosophy is the Brotherhood of Man."⁴

This may be the first biography mentioning H.P.B.'s ecological stand, when in her introduction to an article by "Forester", her love for India moved her to speak of "2,000 miles of scorched fields" as the "presage of doom unless the necessary steps were at once taken to aid lavish Nature to reclothe the

mountain tops with vegetation . . ."⁵

That Blavatsky also foretold many of the future discoveries of modern science is amply evidenced by her chapter: "Science and *The Secret Doctrine*" (pp. 430-62). While H.P.B., herself prophesied that her work would be vindicated in the 20th Century (S.D. II:442), space prohibits citing the many examples ably provided in Cranston's text, including the 'Gaia hypothesis'.⁶

In Part 6, "Horizons Open in the West," Sylvia Cranston presents a remarkable defense of Blavatsky against several past innuendos and unproven assaults upon her character. In a chapter "Was She a Plagiarist?"⁷ the W.E. Coleman charges are dispensed with point by point, as well as the Coues case. Having seen that Blavatsky was a thorn in the sides of the Christian missionaries in Asia, the Coulomb accusations and the 1885 Hodgson report have long been put before the general public without examination. It is timely that a biography can finally make use of the 1986 retraction by Vernon Harrison on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, which sponsored the Hodgson Report. Forgery expert Harrison proves that Hodgson ignored all the evidence in favor of Madame Blavatsky, writing, "I apologize that it has taken 100 years to demonstrate that she wrote truly."⁸

Among the salient features of this biography is that in representing H.P.B.'s innate nobility, self-sacrifice and im-



mense learning, her teachings are presented, as well as her life. As Cranston writes in her preface, "the latter cannot be understood apart from the former." The idea of Masters is presented as applying to women as well as men. Regarding the concept of reincarnation, the author has drawn much on the subject from her earlier anthologies, but includes this time reference to Jung's collective unconscious and interpretations of mythology reintroduced by Joseph Campbell, and other modern comparative religionists. The objects of the T.S. are given as well as a well-rounded description of its formation in 1975.

Her remarkable range of acquaintances from scientists such as Sir William Crookes and Thomas Edison, to Yeats and other chief figures of the Irish Literary Renaissance, proves her wide-spread influence. Even while knowing so many personages from crowned Princes to European savants, she was yet exceedingly humble. Never assuming a leading administrative role in the T.S., when elected to be president of the European section a year before her death, H.P.B. wrote her sister, "But what is the use of all this to me? . . . Honors and titles are altogether out of my line."⁹ She always refused to take money for her teachings.

New to even some Theosophists will be the passages from H.P.B.'s letters to J. Ralston Skinner. Recently discovered by Dr. Ananda Wickremaratne in the archives of the Andover-Harvard Theological Library at Harvard University, they were brought to light through the aid of Sylvia Cranston.

Other new material encompassed in this biography includes Russian material translated recently by Russian friends of the author in America. Passages from Blavatsky letters appearing in a biographical sketch by contemporary Catherine Nekrasova, recently translated from *Russkaya Starina*, correct Marion Meade's implication that the career novelist mother of Blavatsky neglected her daughter.¹⁰ Radha Burnier's 1990 invitation by the Peace Through Culture Foundation and Russian Writer's Union to a belated recognition of their noted countrywoman is gratefully acknowledged. All Theosophists rejoice that the Russian Writers Union declared 1991 the International Year of Blavatsky. This biography will perhaps command such

recognition for H.P.B. by writers one day in the U.S.A., as well.

Predominant in my memories of this fine biography is the emphasis on the compassion found even in childhood years, where the Helena Andreyevna taught little Helena respect for the serfs in the household.¹¹ As revealed by her novels, it was perhaps her mother's concern for the miserable social position of women and inequities suffered by the poor, that influenced Blavatsky's own writings. How beautifully the daughter's deep concern is brought home, by this quote from her most poetic of works, *The Voice of the Silence*:

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

*But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain; nor brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed.*¹²

—Dara Eklund

SOURCES

⁰ Paul Weinzwieg in *Rikka* (Winter 1978), a special issue on outstanding women.

¹ H.P.B., p. 31; quoted from *Lucifer*, August 1888.

² Ibid. p. 214

³ Ibid. p. 216-17.

⁴ Ibid. p. 194; quoting Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, page 437.

⁵ Ibid. p. 205 quoting *The Theosophist*, November 1879.

⁶ See pp. 456-57.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 379-87.

⁸ Ibid. pp. xvii-xviii.

⁹ Ibid. p. xix

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 12, 13; 23-24.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 28.

¹² Ibid. p. 7

SANSKRIT PRONUNCIATION: BOOKLET AND CASSETTE by Bruce Cameron Hall.

Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1992.

The physical appearance of this booklet reflects the impeccable standards of quality which we have come to expect from Theosophical University Press. Its content and that of the accompanying tape follow suit, setting new standards of Sanskrit scholarship for the theosophi-

cal community to emulate. In recent years, the level of competence in the Sanskrit language among the leading edge of Sanskrit scholars in the West has come to par with that of native Sanskrit pandits in India. That level of expertise in Sanskrit pronunciation is now available to theosophists through the booklet and tape under review. This is indeed a heartening development, especially since another theosophical publisher is showing signs of going in the opposite direction (see my review of *The Voice of the Silence* in the Fall 1992 *Eclectic Theosophist*).

This booklet, of course, employs the international transliteration system for Sanskrit, which is used throughout the world in virtually all scholarly publications containing Sanskrit terms. Thus it is important to familiarize oneself with it. Seeing the correct transliteration, while hearing the correct pronunciation on the tape, makes this easy. We also note well-thought-out and carefully executed refinements, such as writing the word "Pali" without diacritical, in conformity with writing the word "Sanskrit" without diacriticals, treating both as English loan words.

While the main purpose of this set is to show correct pronunciation, which it does admirably, the booklet also contains brief definitions of the Sanskrit terms, and the author has not neglected to make advances here as well. For example, it is pointed out that the commonly used term "chela" is actually a Hindi word (a fact which Robert Hütwohl had also ascertained for the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings Cumulative Index*). Under "nirmāṇakāya" we read that this is the Sanskrit word translated by the Tibetan term *tulku*. As Tibetan translation of Sanskrit words was standardized early on through the use of lexicons such as the *Mahāvīryūtpatti*, we may rely on this equivalence, and through this knowledge enrich our understanding of these two terms. Under "deva" is an important note concerning "devachan," pointing out an earlier incorrect etymology and giving the correct one.

Reviews always serve to call the attention of prospective readers to new publications, but in scholarly circles they are also expected to critically examine the material and offer suggestions for improvement, with a view to advancing

knowledge. With the present publication, I could find only two points to discuss in this vein. The reader unaccustomed to critical reviews must not mistake the following comments as in any way denigrating this excellent publication.

First, as with "devachan," where an earlier incorrect etymology in G. de Purucker's *Occult Glossary* required correction, so with "ālaya," listed here under "laya." While the meaning for "ālaya" given in the booklet is fully correct, "non-dissolution," that term (and therefore that meaning) is not the one used by H. P. Blavatsky. As stated in Blavatsky's *Theosophical Glossary*, "The name belongs to the Tibetan system of the contemplative Mahāyāna School," i.e., to the Yogācāra school, where it is a fundamental and distinguishing technical term. Under "ālaya," Monier-Williams' Sanskrit dictionary records a single occurrence with the meaning of non-dissolution, at *Rāmāyaṇa* III.71.10, noting that even here there is the variant reading "anaya." This poor specimen can hardly be the fundamental Yogācāra term used by Blavatsky. The correct term with the correct spelling is "ālaya." Exact knowledge of Yogācāra terminology was not possible in the West until the publication in Sanskrit of a major Yogācāra work, the *Sūtrālamkāra* in 1907. Thus under "ālaya," neither Monier-Williams nor V. S. Apte record the specific Yogācāra usage in their respective Sanskrit dictionaries, published in the late 1800s. The term was, however, given correctly by early writers such as Emil Schlagintweit in his 1863 *Buddhism in Tibet*, from which Blavatsky used many statements (correct and incorrect), including those on ālaya. Among the major Yogācāra works, i.e., those of Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu, the doctrine of ālaya-vijñāna is most fully expounded in Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha*. This was published in the West in 1938-40, in Tibetan, Chinese, and French translation by Étienne Lamotte. Today we may consult Lambert Schmithausen's 1987 *Ālaya-vijñāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, and will shortly be able to consult the forthcoming *Ocean of Eloquence*, a translation by Gareth Sparham of Tsong-kha-pa's work on the ālaya-vijñāna.

Second, concerning "jñ," we read that it can be pronounced as nny, dny, or gy—

but not (p. 8) or never (p. 21) as j-n. In the same terms we read that Sanskrit ph is never pronounced as f, and similarly, th is never pronounced like the English th. The reader naturally assumes that all these pronunciations would be outright errors. The case of jñ, however, should be distinguished from cases like ph and th, where outright error *would be* involved. The pronunciations given for jñ are indeed those used by pandits in India today, but here we may have a case of linguistic decay, as is the reversal of hm noted on p. 6: "... the h was originally pronounced before the m ... Today hm is usually pronounced as mh." This reversal of letters in pronunciation is a well-known phenomenon in historical linguistics, and can be seen today in the pronunciation "hwale" for whale. Another such well-known linguistic phenomenon is the modification of pronunciation of difficult consonant clusters, as in the word "knight," and this may well be what has happened with the pronunciation of Sanskrit jñ. Especially so when we recall that everywhere else in Sanskrit the pronunciation of the same letter in different settings remains the same. Hajime Nakamura in *A Companion to Contemporary Sanskrit* notes that he came across a few pandits who pronounced it as jñ, particularly in Gujarat (p. 13). Nonetheless, it is a fact that jñ is generally pronounced in India as in the booklet and tape under review; and as also noted by Nakamura, if one pronounced it as jñ in India, he would be regarded as a puritan or foreigner.

In summary, this booklet and tape set represents an important advance in Sanskrit scholarship for theosophists, and should be studied by all serious students, particularly theosophical speakers. Yet this need not cast aspersions on previous efforts, such as the helpful glossary and tape set by Geoffrey Barborka, which was produced at a time when western Sanskrit scholars in general were not yet following the correct Indian pronunciation. We should be grateful to Bruce Cameron Hall and Theosophical University Press for making it possible to take this step forward.

—David Reigle

THE CHALCHIUHITE DRAGON: A TALE OF TOLTEC TIMES by Kenneth Morris

New York, Tor Books, 1992; ix + 291 p. \$19.95. 0-312-85264-9.

Kenneth Morris is one of the neglected masters of fantasy. Ursula K. Le Guin praised him in "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie" as one of the three great stylists of the century (in company with E.R. Eddison and J.R.R. Tolkien). His inspired retellings of Welsh legends in *The Fates of the Princes of Dyfed* (1914) and *Book of the Three Dragons* (1930), and his brilliant short stories in *The Secret Mountain and Other Tales* (1926) earned him this high praise. Now more than fifty years after his death the first book publication of Morris's last, unpublished novel will confirm the accuracy of Le Guin's appraisal. Morris is an inspired, original writer in touch with the mythic wellsprings of the fantastic imagination.

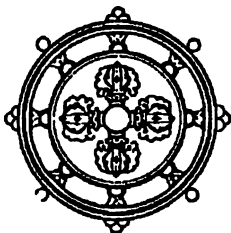
The Chalchihuite Dragon (pronounced "chal-chew-wheat," a type of jade) depicts an archetypal clash of innocence and evil, war and peace, in the pre-Columbian Toltec empires of the Americas. It is full of unpronounceable names and the vivid imminence of gods, described in a poetic, lyrical prose which enables Morris to achieve moments of pure disembodied awareness unique in fantasy writing. His writing shines with greatest brilliance as he evokes transcendent mind-states. As he has a character "approach the Mountain that was God" Morris tells us that "the visible world hardly concealed the invisible that shone and sparkled through it," and he places us astoundingly, convincingly, in the midst of tangible intangibility. The lush natural world is captured in a language correspondingly rich: "The air was soaked with holiness; he could feel the pure meditation of the trees . . ." The style itself is liquid, shimmering from shadow into light, flowing smoothly from elaborate description into mundane action. Morris can with equal grace render the abstract, cosmic creation of a god and the detailed vibrancy of ordinary nature.

The temptation is to quote at length from Morris, hoping to convey the range and textures of his language, but the greater achievement of his writing is the wedding of this lilting, varied prose with

philosophical depth and an active share of wonder woven from the history, myth and legends of these splendid, ancient American civilizations. Morris describes himself as a "Theosophical propagandist," and indeed *The Chalchihuite Dragon* was written for Katherine Tingley, leader of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society while Morris was in residence in the Theosophical community and Professor of History and Literature at the Theosophists' Rāja Yoga College at Point Loma, California. While the book never smacks of propaganda, Theosophy's strong affinities with mysticism, its allegorical understanding of sacred texts, and its spiritual impulses toward a universal theology revealed through scientific and historical truths do provide rich grounding for the magic realism of this Toltec tale.

Morris returned to his native Wales in 1930 before he had completed revisions of his manuscript, but he mailed the finished work to the archives at Point Loma in 1935. There his typescripts were carefully preserved by Society librarians who helped fantasy scholar Douglas Anderson arrange for this publication and paved the way for Anderson's forthcoming companion volume which will bring into print the collected short stories of Morris. Anderson, who contributes a brief "Afterward" to this novel, promises a more extended study in his introduction to the collected stories. Meantime, we can enjoy this book by a neglected master fantasist who here provides fresh evidence that the power of the dragon and the tales and beliefs from native myths are as rich sources for fantasy on American soil as they are in England, Wales, or fairyland. And we will enlarge our understanding of the possibilities of poetic, philosophical fantasy as we see what wonders and inspiring models this master craftsman here has wrought.

— Richard Mathews,
in *SFRA Review*, June 1992



SANSKRIT LANGUAGE STUDY: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH ANNOTATIONS

Compiled and annotated by David Reigle, in collaboration with Nancy Reigle

Cotopaxi, CO: Eastern School Press, 1993. 20 pp.

Possibly the spark within you may have ignited an investigation as to what the Sanskrit language is all about. An intrinsic yearning you say? You have stumbled over Sanskrit words while perusing the Blavatsky, Judge and Purucker literature only to find (at a minimum) that your inadequate knowledge of how to pronounce those words left you wondering even more as to what encompasses this "language of the gods," and the Mother Tongue of all Indo-European languages (Admirably not borrowed but descended from the "divine city writing" of Śambhala). Albeit, this is the only outer-world language which resonates fully enough to apprehend the seven Keys to the Secret Doctrine. One need not maintain the motive to be an Indologist to enjoy the singular richness and unmistakable high vibration of this language. Furthermore, Sanskrit (*saṃskṛta* = perfected, polished) is in some ways easier to learn than English. The proven scientific structure of the grammar and the natural phonetics makes it quite easy to achieve significant progress within a month. If one has decided to study this language, an excellent next course of action would be to obtain a copy of the title under review: *Sanskrit Language Study: A Selected Bibliography with Annotations*.

This long-awaited and intelligently written source book to Sanskrit language study encompasses a very up-to-date survey of some forty-one Sanskrit dictionaries, grammars and companion readers (most of which, to my knowledge, are currently available in print); whether one wishes to study ancient Vedic Sanskrit or the later classical Sanskrit. In 20 pages, the extensive gamut of introductory, intermediate and advanced Sanskrit language materials such as some "true and tried" course-books are clearly reviewed. The range of the materials discussed thus serves as a precursor to beginning study as well as subsequent, more serious investigation of the language and should be on the bookshelf of every Sanskrit

student. This publication is certainly unique.

Seemingly less important areas such as syntax are also surveyed. However, there was no mention of the Adyar Library and Research Centre's three volume set of the *Amarakośa* ("the most celebrated and authoritative ancient lexicon in the Sanskrit language"), either possibly because one volume in the set is hard to obtain, or the actual Sanskrit *kośa* (treasury of verses) and the south Indian commentaries were not translated into English, though the third volume index gives verse word contents and where they are found. Two other editions of the *Amarakośa* were touched upon. Our title under review is what it says it is: a selected bibliography; containing the choicest jewels of Sanskrit grammar study. It will certainly alleviate the pain of having to survey all the grammars, study aids and dictionaries and will minimize the decision-making process as to what is appropriate for the student.

One text really worth stressing to the beginning student, which *Sanskrit Language Study* briefly mentions, is Thomas Egenes' *Introduction to Sanskrit, Part One*, (published by Point Loma Publications). This reviewer would like to applaud the efforts of Dr. Egenes and extend an invitation to all starting Sanskrit language students to purchase a copy. The book really fills a long-held vacant niche for a beginning text and is an excellent self-instructional workbook for those who do not have access to a competent teacher. For emphasis in learning the vocabulary and gaining expertise with the grammatical rules, the vocabulary is kept relatively small throughout the eighteen chapters. This can be a great advantage, for a solid base is established by repetition, allowing the student to think in Sanskrit very quickly and establish an intuitive synthesis understanding of a sentence and think in the Sanskrit base or viewpoint. What is needed however, is a set of pronunciation tapes to go along with the exercises, enabling the pupil to also speak the sentences in the exercises for reinforcement and correctness of pronunciation. This would further allow the student to "capture" the ancient Sanskrit "database," so to speak, and also correctly pronounce Sanskrit mantra which are particularly available to the student in Buddhist material. (We westerners have unfortu-

nately butchered Sanskrit mantra pronunciation almost beyond recognition) (causing the wrong occult powers to be released). (Bruce Cameron Hall's *Sanskrit Pronunciation: Booklet and Cassette* would help fill that role.) The textbook maintains short but effective chapters enabling the pupil to build upon the vocabulary's sentence structure as new grammatical elements are introduced. In finalizing each chapter, abundant exercise examples are provided for translating both ways: from English-Sanskrit and Sanskrit-English, and answers are provided. Grammatical sentence elements (such as the seven-plus-one noun cases or *vibhakti*-s, verbs and compounds) are established within a clear sentence structure, allowing the student very little confusion for isolating the grammatical element in question, thus plowing the way for a quick grasp of the subject matter. Because tangible results would come early, the student is rewarded thereby and impelled to move forward, as one should in any language study. After comfortably working through Dr. Egenes' textbook, one would be adequately prepared to use the University of California (Berkeley) text: *Devavāṇīpraveśikā: An Introduction to the Sanskrit Language*, which includes language tapes spoken by an Indian paṇḍita (a Sanskrit proficient and a real joy to hear!). This latter text would certainly correct any errors that may have crept in the student's mind during his or her use of the Egenes text.

Sanskrit Language Study: A Selected Bibliography with Annotations may be obtained by writing: Eastern School Press, 3185 Boyd Rd., Cotopaxi, CO 81223-9688.

—Robert Hütwohl

H.P.B. TEACHES: AN ANTHOLOGY *Compiled by Michael Gomes*

Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. 579 pp. pb

Both 1992, the official "Year of Blavatsky" in Russia and continuing into 1993, we find many new and important Blavatsky related works coming forth. This volume, by Theosophical historian and researcher Micheal Gomes, is the perfect companion volume to read in conjunction with Sylvia Cranston's new

Blavatsky biography (see review by Dara Eklund this issue). Here is Blavatsky's life work message from her own polemical essays and writings and with the benefit of being arranged historically, with articles in sequence from 1874 until her death in 1891. Excellent and insightful historical notes are appended that give the context of the time period and place she was writing in. Articles such as "The Theory of Cycles", "Re-incarnations in Tibet", "Have Animals Souls?", her profound and often overlooked essay refuting philosophical pessimism—"The Origin of Evil", "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels", her past and future visionary "Karmic Visions" give this anthology a depth that previous attempts have lacked. H.P.B. Teaches is a Teaching book from the profound reservoir of the Blavatsky mind and highly recommended for students both new and experienced in theosophical tradition.

—Ed.

Extracts from three of Blavatsky's essays (which are all included in H.P.B. Teaches) "What is Truth?", "Spiritual Progress?", and "Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty" are here quoted from for their current and timely relevance to the human condition. —Ed.

"What is Truth?"

[*Lucifer*, Feb., 1888: BCWIX pp.30-42]

Truth is the Voice of Nature and of time-

Truth is the startling monitor within us-

Naught is without it, it comes from the stars,

The golden sun, and every breeze that blows . . .

Wm. Thompson Bacon

"What is Truth?" asked Pilate of one who, if the claims of the Christian Church are even approximately correct, must have known it. But He kept silent. And the truth, which he did not divulge, remained unrevealed, for his later followers as much as for the Roman Governor. The silence of Jesus, however, on this and other occasions, does not prevent his present followers from acting as though they had received the ultimate and absolute Truth itself; and

from ignoring the fact that only such Words of Wisdom had been given to them as contained a share of the truth, itself concealed in parables and dark, though beautiful sayings. (Jesus says to the "Twelve"—"Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables," etc. (Mark, iv. 11).

This policy led gradually to dogmatism and assertion. Dogmatism in churches, dogmatism in science, dogmatism everywhere. The possible truths, hazily perceived in the world of abstraction, like those inferred from observation and experiment in the world of matter, are forced upon the profane multitudes, too busy to think for themselves, under the form of Divine revelation and Scientific authority. But the same question stands open from the days of Socrates and Pilate down to our own age of wholesale negation: is there such a thing as absolute truth in the hands of any one party or man? Reason answers, "there cannot be." There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them.

In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in our race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us had to find that (to him) final knowledge in himself. As not two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination through itself, according to its capacity, and from no human light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. Tot homines, quot sententiae ["so many men, so many minds"]-is an immortal truism. The sun is one but its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. Polarity is universal, but the polarizer lies in our own consciousness. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely. But man's consciousness again, is only the sun-

flower of the earth. Longing for the warm ray, the plant can only turn to the sun, and move round and round in following the course of the unreachable luminary: its roots keep it fast to the soil, and half its life is passed in the shadow. . . . It thus follows that, though "general abstract truth is the most precious of all blessings" for many of us, as it was for Rousseau, we have, meanwhile, to be satisfied with relative truths. In sober fact, we are a poor set of mortals at best, ever in dread before the face of ever a relative truth, lest it should devour ourselves and our petty little preconceptions along with us. As for an absolute truth, most of us are as incapable of seeing it as of reaching the moon on a bicycle. Firstly, because absolute truth is as immovable as the mountain of Mohammed, which refused to disturb itself for the prophet, so that he had to go to it himself. And we have to follow his example if we would approach it even at a distance. Secondly, because the kingdom of absolute truth is not of this world, while we are too much of it. And thirdly, because notwithstanding that in the poet's fancy man is

. . . the abstract
Of all perfection, which the work-
manship
Of heaven hath modelled . . .

In reality he is a sorry bundle of anomalies and paradoxes, an empty wind bag inflated with his own importance, with contradictory and easily influenced opinions. He is at once an arrogant and a weak creature, which, though in constant dread of some authority, terrestrial or celestial, will yet-

. . . like an angry age,
Play such fantastic tricks before
high Heaven
As make the angels weep.

Now, since truth is a multifaced jewel, the facets of which it is impossible to perceive all at once; and since, again, no two men, however anxious to discern truth, can see even one of those facets alike, what can be done to help them to perceive it? As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we

say-develop in you the inner knowledge. From the time when the Delphic oracle said the inquirer "Man, know thyself," no greater or more important truth has ever been taught. Without such perception, man will remain ever blind to many a relative, let alone absolute, truth. Man has to know himself, i.e., acquire the inner perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is the symbol of Eternity, and no finite mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fullness can ever dawn upon it. . . .

To approach even terrestrial truths requires, first of all, love of truth for its own sake, for otherwise no recognition of it will follow. And who loves truth in this age for its own sake? How many of us are prepared to search for, accept, and carry it out, in the midst of a society in which anything that would achieve success has to be built on appearances, not on reality, on self-assertion, not on intrinsic value? We are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of receiving truth. The fair heavenly maiden descends only on a (to her) congenial soil—the soil of an impartial, unprejudiced mind, illuminated by pure Spiritual Consciousness; and both are truly rare dwellers in civilized lands. In our century of steam and electricity, when man lives at a maddening speed that leaves him barely time for reflection, he allows himself usually to be drifted down from cradle to grave, nailed to the Procrustean bed of custom and conventionality. Now conventionality—pure and simple—is a congenital LIE, as it is in every case a "simulation of feelings according to a received standard" (F. W. Robertson's definition); and where there is any simulation there cannot be any truth. How profound the remark made by Byron, that "truth is a gem that is found at a great depth; whilst on the surface of this world all things are weighed by the false scales of custom," is best known to those who are forced to live in the stifling atmosphere of such social conventionality, and who, even when willing and anxious to learn, dare not accept the truths they long for, for fear of the ferocious Moloch called Society, etc. [Blavatsky continues this powerful essay connecting the nature of selfishness with respectability and resolving power conflicts and violence, that all classes of

society function on an essentially deceptive basis, and an impassioned plea for the absence of bigotry and that "Theosophy allows a hearing and a fair chance to all."

"Spiritual Progress"

[*The Theosophist*, May 1885: BCW VI, pp. 331-37]

Christina Rossetti's well-known lines:

Does the road wind up-hill all
the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Does the journey take the whole
long day?
From morn till night, my friend.

are like an epitome of the life of those who are truly treading the path which leads to higher things. Whatever differences are to be found in the various presentations of the Esoteric Doctrine, as in every age it donned a fresh garment, different both in hue and texture to that which preceded; yet in every one of them we find the fullest agreement upon one point—the road to spiritual development. One only inflexible rule has been binding upon the neophyte, as it is binding now—the complete subjugation of the lower nature by the higher. From the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* to the recently published *Light of the Path*, search as we may through the bibles of every race and cult, we find but one only way—hard, painful, troublesome, by which man can gain the true spiritual insight. And how can it be otherwise since all religions and all philosophies are but the variants of the first teachings of the One Wisdom, imparted to men at the beginning of the cycle by the Planetary Spirit?

The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, become—he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent in the impermanent, and not only seeking but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable, in a world of which

the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change, and always, just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

Again, the idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption, the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical but mental and intellectual.

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives, the trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen—it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly bear. If we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescences, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows, not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg; but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime—every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

"Civilization, The Death of Art and Beauty"

[Lucifer, May 1891, BCW XIII pp.177-90]

Organize and send out missionaries the world over, to tell picturesque Japan and other countries ready to fall victims that, to imitate the will-o'-the-wisp of European culture and fascination, means for a non-Christian land, the committing of suicide; that it means sacrificing one's individuality for an empty show and shadow; at best it is to exchange the original and the picturesque for the vulgar and the hideous. Truly and indeed it is high time that at last something should be done in this direction, and before the deceitful civilization of the conceited nations of but yesterday has irretrievably hypnotized the older races, and made them succumb to its upas-tree wiles and supposed superiority. Otherwise, old arts

and artistic creations, everything original and unique will very soon disappear. Already national dresses and time-honored customs, and everything beautiful, artistic, and worth preservation is fast disappearing from view. At no distant day, alas, the best relics of the past will perhaps be found only in museums in sorry, solitary, and be-ticketed samples preserved under glass!

Such is the work and the unavoidable result of our modern civilization. Skin-deep in reality in its visible effects, in the "blessings" it is alleged to have given to the world, its rots are rotten to the core. It is to its progress that



selfishness and materialism, the greatest curses of the nations, are due; and the latter will most surely lead to the annihilation of art and of the appreciation of the truly harmonious and beautiful. Hitherto, materialism has only led to a universal tendency to unification on the material plane and a corresponding diversity on that of thought and spirit. It is this universal tendency, which by propelling humanity, through its ambition and selfish greed, to an incessant chase after wealth and the obtaining at any price of the supposed blessings of this life, causes it to aspire or rather gravitate to one level, the lowest of all—the plane of empty appearance. Materialism and indifference to all save the selfish realization of wealth and power, and the over-feeding of national and personal vanity, have gradually led nations and men to the almost entire oblivion of spiritual ideals, of the love of nature to the correct appreciation of things. Like a hideous leprosy our Western civilization has eaten its way through all the quarters of the globe and hard-

ened the human heart. "Soul-saving" is its deceitful, lying pretext; greed for additional revenue through opium, rum, and the inoculation of European vices—the real aim. In the far East it has infected with the spirit of imitation the higher classes of the "pagans"—save China, whose national conservatism deserves our respect; and in Europe it has engrafted fashion—save the mark—even on the dirty starving proletariat itself! For the last thirty years, as if some deceitful semblance of a reversion to the ancestral type—awarded to men by the Darwinian theory in its moral added to its physical characteristics—were contemplated by an evil spirit tempting mankind, almost every race and nation under the sun in Asia has gone mad in its passion for aping Europe. This, added to the frantic endeavor to destroy Nature in every direction, and also every vestige of older civilizations—far superior to our own in arts, godliness, and the appreciation of the grandiose and harmonious—must result in such national calamities. Therefore, do we find hitherto artistic and picturesque Japan succumbing wholly to the temptation of justifying the "ape theory" by simianizing its populations in order to bring the country on a level with canting, greedy and artificial Europe!

For certainly Europe is all this. It is canting and deceitful from its diplomats down to its custodians and religion, from its political down to its social laws, selfish greedy and brutal beyond expression in its grabbing characteristics. And yet there are those who wonder at the gradual decadence of true art, as if art could exist without imagination, fancy, and a just appreciation of the beautiful in Nature, or without poetry and high religious, hence, metaphysical aspirations! The galleries of paintings and sculpture, we hear, become every year poorer in quality, if richer in quantity. It is lamented that while there is a plethora of ordinary productions, the greatest scarcity of remarkable pictures and statuary prevails. Is this not most evidently due to the facts that (a) the artists will very soon remain with no better models than nature *morte* (or "still life") to inspire themselves with; and (b) that the chief concern is not the creation of artistic objects, but their speedy sale and profits? Under such conditions, the fall of true art is only a natural consequence.

Owing to the triumphant march and the invasion of civilization, Nature, as well as man and ethics, is sacrificed, and is fast becoming artificial. Climates are changing, and the face of the whole world will soon be altered. Under the murderous hand of the pioneers of civilization, the destruction of whole primeval forests is leading to the drying up of rivers, and the opening of the Canal of Suez has changed the climate of Egypt as that of Panama will divert the course of the Gulf Stream. Almost tropical countries are now becoming cold and rainy, and fertile lands threaten to be soon transformed into sandy deserts. A few years more and there will not remain within a radius of fifty miles

around our large cities one single rural spot inviolate from vulgar speculation. In scenery, the picturesque and the natural is daily replaced by the grotesque and the artificial. Scarce a landscape in England but the fair body of nature is desecrated by the advertisements of "Pears' Soap" and "Beechams's Pills." The pure air of the country is polluted with smoke, the smells of greasy rail-way engines, and the sickening odors of gin, whiskey, and beer. And once that every natural spot in the surrounding scenery is gone, and the eye of the painter finds but the artificial and hideous products of modern speculation to rest upon, artistic taste will have to follow suit and disappear along with them.

[Blavatsky's essays continue on with such great and sometimes prophetic insight into our current times as much or more applicable now as one hundred years ago. It was not rare but in her heroic nature, rather a given, to bring the vision of Theosophy into the affairs of daily life and comment on social, ecological, and psychological issues. We would appreciate comments or articles from our readers relating Blavatsky Classical Theosophy to current events. -Ed.]



ITEMS OF INTEREST

KROTONA INSTITUTE AND SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY

Winter 1993 courses included, among others, "Blavatsky: Short and Sharp" (presented by Diana Dunningham-Chapotin.) The pieces chosen offer piercing insights into cosmos and character as well as into spiritual life and practice. They reveal subtleties and less familiar aspects of H.P.B.'s teaching and may challenge some stereotypes and accepted ideas. The facilitator uses an informal format which she calls a 'study circle,' based largely on discussion and input from those present. Another course was titled "The Heart of the Secret Doctrine" (presented by Shirley Nicholson.) She focuses on passages suggested by H.P.B., which present the basic principles undergirding the whole of eastern philosophy.

LONG BEACH TS PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

Among those between January 1st and March 19th, 1993 were: "The Educational Philosophy of Maria Montessori" by Barbara McClean, M.A., Director, Montessori School), "The Moral and Ethical Aspects of Law Enforcement", presented by Rick Paap, Officer, Seal Beach Police Dept.); "Gandhi and the Theosophical Society" by Dr. Robert Bonnell, President of the Long Beach TS group.

Theosophical Reflections, whose former address was in Maryland and edited by Claire Walker, has now become a publication of the Long Beach branch of the T.S., with the same editor who has moved to Seal Beach, Calif., and "in consultation with Dr. Robert Bonnell and members of the Lodge." Address: 14001 Thunderbird Dr., 4-k, Seal Beach, CA. 90740.

AND OF MAGAZINES



THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY, A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF RESEARCH

The editor, Dr. James A. Santucci (Dept. of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, Calif.), writes in its issue, Vol. IV, No.3, published earlier this year: "One of my goals as the editor of Theosophical History is to increase and internationalize the circulation of the journal. TH is currently distributed on all continents to a readership con-

sisting of members of the various Theosophical societies, academics and researchers in the areas of Gnosticism, Esotericism, Mysticism, New Age and New Religions. One positive sign apropos the journal's circulation is the growing number of libraries subscribing to the journal. In order to continue this latter trend, I am asking for your assistance. Please request the library you frequent to order the journal for its collection, or, if the library does not have the funding for expanding its periodical collection, consider contributing the journal. This is already the practice of some of the subscribers. If you are interested in expanding the readership of TH, please write me for additional information."



THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST

The March 1993 issue of this independent journal, published monthly (\$7.50 per year) by Richard Slusser (140 S. 33rd St., Boulder, Colorado), concludes the article from the previous issue "Stainton Moses and Emperor", referencing important historical happenings of the earliest years of the T.S. It also carries an article by Bing Escudero, "The Way, the Truth and the Life", and unfortunate matters concerning the 1993 election notices in *The American Theosophist*. Of stirring interest are the extracts from a document, an article by Dmitry Popov, head of the Russian Theosophical Society, about the history of Theosophy in Russia. A brief quote from that: "The Russians . . . are rediscovering Helena Petrovna Blavatsky with an enthusiasm that would astonish us. Articles in newspapers and magazines, television programs, conferences, publications in editions of one hundred thousand are common. Her birthplace is now a place of honor, on which a plaque has been placed, and to which pilgrimages are made. . . . As a member of the Board of the Russian Theosophical Society, I meet with many Theosophists during my annual visits to Russia. I find their sense of wonder and excitement, especially in the young, inspiring and energizing. With

such an abundant availability of constructive energy much will be accomplished quickly, even in the context of today's terrible material difficulties there." (Daniel Entin is Executive Director, Nicholas Roerich Museum, 319 West 107th St. New York, N.Y. 10025-2799.)

DER THEOSOPHISCHE PFAD

The March/April 1993 issue of this bi-monthly (which "follows the Blavatsky Tradition", and is edited by Irmgard Scheithauer of The Theosophical Society-Arbeitskreis Unterlengenhardt, in Berlin), carries the article "The Dwellers on High Mountains", originally published in *The Word*, June 1912, also in *Echoes of the Orient*, vol. III. (published by Point Loma Pubs.) Also a lengthy article by Geoffrey A. Barborka, "The Mahatma Letters"; an extract from G. de Purucker's talk on June 24, 1931 in London to the inter-theosophical gathering there honoring H.P. Blavatsky's centenary. Also included is "Obelisk and the Universal Tradition" by Wm.W. Stevens.

THEOSOFISCH FORUM

Issued by Het Theosofisch Genootschap (The Theosophical Society)

Hortensiastraat 20, 2906 Cr Capelle aan de Jissel, Its "Number 56" of early 1993 is a special number reporting the

Convention of the Theosophical Society and the School for study of the Esoteric Philosophy, held Sept. 27 1992 at Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with presentations by Willy Schmit, G.J. Kijff, Jan van de Sluis, extracts from "Wind of the Spirit" by G. de P., Katherine Tingley's *Wisdom of the Heart*; a selection from Helen Todd's article "Truth and the Esoteric Tradition", and greetings from Point Loma Publications and Friends. (One should really learn to read Dutch!)

THEOSOPHY

(published by Theosophy Company, United Lodge of Theosophists)

The February 1993 number marks its Volume 81, No.4, and in addition to its always instructive and interesting "On the Lookout", has a reprint of a paper by W.Q. Judge read before the Aryan T.S., Feb, 1893, titled "Spiritualism"; also interesting articles "Hidden Karmic Threads", "The Force of Ideals", and No.3 of "Theosophy and the Environment."

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

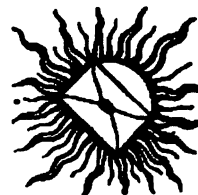
Hilda Lewis, Bournemouth, England: I like the new form of the Eclectic.... All that history of G. de P's work was, or is most interesting; but I still do not think the Fraternization Movement failed. G. de P. sowed the seed, through storm, tempest and all sorts. The seed matured, put down roots, below the level of our vision. We are all so imperfect, and still hindered by our personal egos.

Ann Evans, Deeside, Clwyd, England: I think the new magazine is an improvement in every way, most attractive and appropriate format. Congratulations to all concerned, and very best wishes for your continuing success.

Arthur Koenig, Los Angeles, Ca.: I wonder what my life would have been and what it would be now if I wouldn't have

found the Point Loma Theosophical Society back in 1942. I found what I was looking for! (And with this a Christmas greeting and donation.)

M. Madhar Natchiya, Veyangoda, Sri Lanka (secretary to Mrs. K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim): We have duly received your *The Eclectic Theosophist* Fall 1992 issue in which we noted our letter has been published. We avail this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and admiration for the noble service you are so happily rendering through *The Eclectic Theosophist* in uplifting the humanity on the broad basis of Universal Brotherhood. May the coming year bring a greater measure of peace and understanding throughout the world. Yours in Divine Love.



IN MEMORIAM

Ann Forsyth Danno writes: On January 16, 1993, Dr. James Whitcraft Forsyth died after a brief illness in Los Angeles, Calif. at the age of 93. He was born in Los Angeles at the turn of the century and introduced to Theosophy by writer Will Comfort in the early 1920's. He had been president of the L.A. Lodge and written extensively, was a competent astrologer, and founded The New School of Hermetic Studies 12 years ago. Theosophy was really his life work. ...

UNIVERSAL PERSPECTIVE

THE COSMIC CHRIST, AN "OLD POND" AND EASTER THOUGHTS

G. de Purucker

The Pathway of Beauty, the Pathway of Peace and Strength, the Pathway of the Great Quiet, is within you—not within the material body, but within the inmost focus of your consciousness. This is the Pathway that the great Sages and Seers of all the ages have taught. Follow that Pathway. It will lead you to the heart of the Sun, the Master and Guide of our Solar System; and later, if you follow it, it will conduct you to a destiny still more sublime. Yet that sublime destiny is only the beginning, only the beginning of something grander; for evolution, growth, expansion of consciousness, go on forever.

In different countries there are different ways of phrasing these things of inner beauty. I listened two nights ago to a speech by a Japanese lecturer, a thoughtful man, a man of kindly heart, one who had already seen somewhat of the Vision Beautiful and who, during the course of his lecture, illustrated one point of his address by an example—a Japanese poem. I will repeat this poem as I heard it; and in this connection please remember that the essence of poetry is visioning. Poetry is not merely the collocation of words; it is not riming. The noblest poetry often is that which has no rime, but which instead appeals powerfully to the intellect and to the heart, because it gives vision. This Japanese poem consisted of three lines only, nine words:

An old pond—
A frog plunging—
A great splash



The beauty of this little poem lies in the fact that there is in it no meretricious ornament, no wordy decoration; and because of this fact a thought, a picture, vivid, graphic, real, is presented to the minds of the hearers, and then the magic of thought is woven by the minds of the hearers themselves. And each man interprets the beauty of this thought strictly according to his own development of the understanding and of the poetic sense—which means the sense of beauty and consciousness.

Now, what is this 'old pond'? asked the lecturer. It is the spiritual life, he replied, the inner life, the Great Peace, called 'old' because it has existed from eternity. It is the essence of the spiritual world; and it is called 'pond' after the same fashion that made other mystical thinkers of other ancient peoples speak of 'the waters of space.' And 'a frog plunging'—how graphic in its simplicity! It seems a desecration to color the picture by trying to explain it. The frog plunging into the water where he feels at home is the man yearning to return into his own—to re-enter the spiritual existence where his soul is native. Is not this the very heart of the idea embodied in the Easter-Festival? Is it not man rising out of the material and plunging into the spiritual of his soul? There indeed are the Resurrection and the Life!

The spiritually thoughtful man, yearning to be and to grow and to enter into the Light and the Great Peace, such a one may have his own individual 'Easter' at any time His 'Easter' comes to him, his 'Resurrection' into the spiritual life comes to him, when he breaks the shell of the personal man with all its weaknesses and cloying desires and enshrouding veils, and casts that shell aside. Not by 'killing' the body—that is not the essential idea—but by becoming at one with the god within, so that the body is not longer a hindrance but a faithful tool with which to carry out in this our sphere of existence the mandates of the inner god.

Is not this the very heart of the idea embodied in the Easter-Festival? Is it not man rising out of the material and plunging into the spiritual of his soul?

And the 'Crucifixion'? Its meaning is the resignation, painful to most human beings, of the material personal man and exchanging it for a greater light; and it is called a crucifixion because to the personal man with his limited vision it seems like his own death. We must remember that the inner Christ—or the inner Buddha—is fixed to the cross of material existence; but after the 'crucifixion' there ensues the 'resurrection' of the inner god . . .

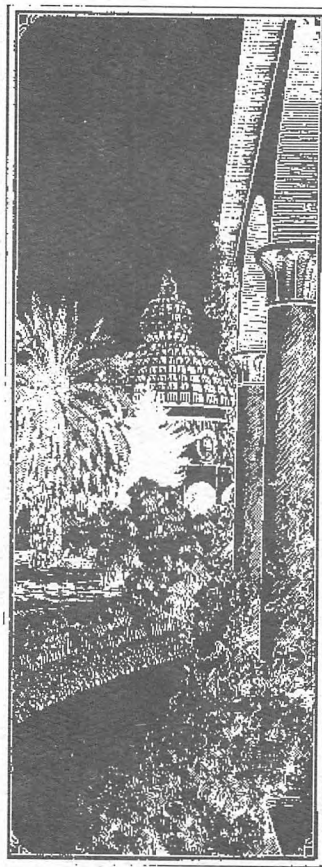
You cannot become one with your own inner god until the personal, who is the becomer, has become at least to a certain extent godlike. You cannot enter into the Great Peace until you yourself have become peaceful. Oh! 'Resurrect' the god within you, the inner Christ, the inner Buddha, the inner Brahma—call it by what name you will: that Solar Splendor which is the very core of your being. Be like the frog of the Japanese poet, plunging into the old pond, the ancient pond of your spiritual consciousness. Then you will attain truth, light, peace, love, pity, compassion, strength, discrimination, vision, glory unspeakable . . . May the time soon come for you when the Great Peace, the Boundless Vision, will be yours.

—extracts from a public lecture given at Easter time, April 1931, in the Temple of Peace, at Point Loma, California.



So man was given one drop of wisdom, one drop of knowledge, one drop of power, and one drop of gift or love (or talent). Tunkashila is the wisdom in itself. The knowledge is a woman, and we call it the Earth. We call it fire, rock, water, and green. So the basis of the knowledge is the fire. In our language we speak of the *peta wicoicage*—the “fire generation.” All the shapes and forms of life originate from the fire. In your scientific language you call it the atom. The rock we call *maka*. *Maka* is the Earth. So we have *Grandfather* who is the wisdom and *Grandmother* who is the knowledge. But the wisdom and knowledge are really one.

Wallace Black Elk



The Eclectic Theosophist is dedicated to publishing essays, studies, fiction and poetry from the Wisdom Religion that expresses the essential underlying unity of life, including philosophy, science, ethics, myth, sacred literature, and the world's religions. The “Blavatsky/Point Loma Tradition” follows a qualitative value sourced in the ancient ‘Perennial Philosophy’, re-established in the West, by H.P. Blavatsky during the Theosophic Renaissance of the latter part of the last century. Our purpose is to serve as an open forum for the ablest exponents of Theosophic insight, thought and practice from both the ancient world and current time.

